

**Writing in the ESL classroom:
challenges, tasks and feedback**

Ana Cristina Félix Pires

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WRITING IN THE ESL CLASSROOM: CHALLENGES, TASKS, AND FEEDBACK

ANA CRISTINA FÉLIX PIRES

ABSTRACT

Writing is a pivotal skill that affects students beyond their years at school. Teaching students how to write in a foreign language is a challenging task that can be undertaken through different approaches. It is the teachers' responsibility to develop teaching strategies and apply a variety of tasks to support students improve their writing skills. Teachers must consider the different perspectives on how feedback can be an effective instrument in developing these skills, as well as other competencies such as creativity and critical thinking, among others. Throughout my Practicum several activities following both product and process-based approaches were implemented and thorough feedback on linguistic and content-related aspects was provided using information and communication technologies (hereinafter, ICT). Students were surveyed and questioned on their perceptions on the writing skills developed as well as on their difficulties, which would then be contrasted with their qualitative outcome of writing activities and quantitative grades. As a result, an eclectic application of the theory researched seemed to provide the most benefit to students regarding language, content and organization of their writing.

Keywords: Teaching, English as a Second Language, Writing, Feedback

RESUMO

Escrever é uma competência fundamental que afeta os alunos para além dos anos na escola. Ensinar os alunos a escrever numa segunda língua é uma tarefa desafiadora que pode ser realizada através de diferentes abordagens. É responsabilidade dos professores desenvolver estratégias de ensino e aplicar uma variedade de tarefas para ajudar os alunos a melhorar suas habilidades de escrita. Os professores devem considerar as diferentes perspectivas de como o feedback pode ser um instrumento eficaz no desenvolvimento dessas habilidades, para além de outras como criatividade e pensamento crítico, entre outras. Nesta prática de ensino supervisionada, várias atividades que seguem abordagens baseadas em produtos e processos foram implementadas e *feedback* completo sobre aspetos linguísticos e relacionados com conteúdo foi fornecido, a partir do uso de tecnologias de informação e comunicação (doravante, TIC). Os alunos foram questionados sobre as suas perceções em relação às atividades de escrita aplicadas, bem como sobre o seu desenvolvimento, que seria contrastado depois com as suas notas quantitativas. Como resultado, uma aplicação eclética da teoria estudada pareceu proporcionar o maior benefício aos estudantes em relação à língua, conteúdo e organização na escrita.

Palavras-chave: Ensino, Inglês como segunda língua, Escrita, *Feedback*

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1. Introduction

This report was produced as the result of my supervised teaching practice and aims to articulate both theory about the teaching of writing with the practice of teaching writing production – in an actual classroom. Observation tasks were implemented and extensive notes were taken to, subsequently, analyze the different strategies towards teaching writing in order to identify common difficulties and challenges. A survey was taken with one of the classes I worked with, and some students were interviewed individually on their experience with specific writing tasks.

Having identified appropriate theoretical support, in particular regarding the way both teachers and learners face the writing skill, an action-research methodology was used to address how different tasks and activities can be explored to motivate and overcome students' difficulties. Teacher's difficulties were addressed as well regarding how to provide productive feedback and specific techniques to improve the way students understand and use the suggestions given to them to learn.

Concerning structure, this report is organized into two parts. In the following chapter, the choice of the topic is justified through the examination of existing relevant literature. In the fourth chapter, the implementation of different tasks is presented, together with the challenges which ensued and how they were mitigated. In each case, a critical reflection on the results achieved is given, whenever possible including students' insights.

2. Literature Review

In this chapter, I will explain the rationale behind choosing to focus this report on written production and explore the existing information on the topic, in particular regarding the way both teachers and learners face writing, how different tasks and activities can be carried out to motivate students and aid them in overcoming obstacles, and how feedback in its various forms can be successfully implemented.

2.1. The importance of writing

Learning how to write well is a complex and challenging endeavor. This is true in one's native language, and thus even more so in a second or foreign language. The importance of writing well is clear, however, and teachers must prepare students for a time when communication with others is more facilitated and encouraged than ever before.

Writing is among the most important abilities for students to develop and writing skills are necessary for most professions, as well as a key means to exercise full citizenship. Even in less formal contexts, such as in instant written communication online for example, the importance of effective written expression cannot be denied, since written utterances will be perceived by others as a valuable source of information about the writer (Ur 150).

In the language classroom, writing is most commonly used as a tool for practicing the language students have been learning, inviting them to make use of new structures, vocabulary, or a new tense in context for instance (Harmer, *How to Teach English* 112). However, besides being a way to check if students can use the language and having very specific real-life uses, writing helps students improve various other skills as well, some of which have been deemed necessary to thrive in the 21st century (World Economic Forum). These competencies are typically not taught through a book as they are not knowledge to be transmitted; rather, they are tools and strategies that will allow students to obtain knowledge autonomously. Writing can be an effective means to work on such learning skills, commonly referred to as “the 4 Cs”: critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration.

Critical thinking is a skill that can be strongly related to writing, in particular in the context of formal education. Very often, a lack of writing skills can lead others to assume

that the writer does not possess thinking and reasoning skills. Essentially, poor writing can lead to a perceived lack of expertise and care regardless of actual competence from the writer (Weigle 5). Writing can be a way for students to explore and share personal views, opinions and experiences as well, with language being a means to their expressive creative abilities (Hyland, *Second Language Writing* 8), thus promoting self-reflection and the development of self-expression. As for collaboration with others, it cannot happen without communication, and writing, together with speaking, is its primary basis. A student who learns how to think critically and creatively and express their thoughts clearly and effectively will develop competences which are useful throughout their lives. Writing is a means to that end.

2.2. Challenges

While the importance of good writing skills seems to be acknowledged and consensual, it appears to be a difficult skill to learn. Reading and listening, as receptive skills, require understanding of the language but not necessarily the capacity to produce it (Spratt et al 31), making students passive perceivers of language. Writing, like speaking, is a productive skill, meaning students must construct ideas by themselves, organize and express them by using the language they are learning (Spratt et al 43). As such, when students begin writing, they must make several decisions and keep several aspects in mind: what type of text they intend to produce, what register to use, the vocabulary they need to get their point across, the grammatical rules they've been taught to follow, how to structure the text coherently, and the very ideas they mean to communicate (Spratt et al 37).

2.2.1. Anxiety and motivation

The dimension and complexity of a writing task can be daunting even to students who otherwise feel confident in English classes. It is an intensive and arduous skill to practice, with common complaints from students being not knowing what to write about, not having anything interesting to add to the suggested topic, not knowing how to begin their text or how to organize their ideas, and then feeling "stuck" by needing to use language they do not feel entirely confident with (Harmer, *How to Teach Writing* 61).

Linguistic difficulties are but one of the factors that affect students' willingness towards engaging in writing tasks. With weaker students, all these factors may lead to avoidance of, or limited engagement in, said tasks, perpetuating the cycle of anxiety towards practicing the skill.

Most students observed in my practicum reported either indifference or a strong dislike towards writing tasks. In a survey taken from the 10th year class I observed and taught, students claimed their biggest difficulty with writing was related to organizing their ideas so that their text was well structured, as well as remembering vocabulary in English ([appendix 1](#)). In the same survey, when asked about what makes writing tasks easier for them, over half the students who responded said they felt more comfortable beginning a writing task when the topics were interesting and provided different aspects for them to approach ([appendix 1](#)). The answers obtained from these students mirror the anxieties outlined before, in that several factors contribute to students' unwillingness to engage in writing.

2.2.2. Product and process approaches to writing

In order to dispute this tendency students have to dislike writing, it is important for teachers to review critically how they have been addressing this skill in the teaching process. Knowledge of the different conceptions of teaching and learning writing, and of the different methods available, together with an awareness of the diversity of materials and tasks available, can help teachers do exactly this and, at the same, improve students' motivation for practicing and improving the use of this skill.

The first step teachers can take is to decide on the learning objectives to work on through writing. There are several different approaches and variants towards the practice of this skill but all fall within the dichotomy of whether writing tasks should have their focus on the end result of the learning process, or on the different stages of writing which promote language learning (Nunan *Language Teaching Methodology* 86).

A product approach to writing focuses on linguistic knowledge and, as such, writing is seen as a product that is built from the writer's control of language and of its lexical and grammatical aspects (Hyland, *Second Language Writing* 3). This is not to say that content or

the final product is not important; however, the primary focus rests on how far students were able to express themselves in a fluent and clear manner (Nunan *Language Teaching Methodology* 87).

Putting this approach into practice, students are usually shown a model text which is read and analyzed so as to familiarize them with its content, language, style, or other aspects. Having identified, as well as manipulated through controlled-practice exercises, the main characteristics of the text, students can produce their own text by imitating the model they were shown. From this perspective, a student who writes well is a student who follows the structural orientation given and is accurate in terms of language use (Hyland, *Second Language Writing* 4).

A process approach, on the other hand, essentially focuses on the activities which are believed to lead to the development of language (Nunan *Language Teaching Methodology* 87) and discourse construction. The creative process behind writing is seen as the ideal focal point of any writing task, which allows students more freedom to consider what they mean to convey and more steps to go through so as to perfect the end product.

Of the possible variants of this approach, all include pre-writing tasks in which students brainstorm, select and organize ideas they want to address on their texts. This first instance means to encourage students to write down their thoughts without worrying about being accurate, and often allows that they work collaboratively on creating mind maps, lists or other strategies (Nunan, *Language Teaching Methodology* 87). When the writing stage begins, students are made aware that what they are writing is an initial draft, and that they will be given additional opportunities to improve, complete and revise their work after receiving feedback from the teacher, and even from their peers (Harmer, *The Practice of English Language Teaching* 326).

These two approaches are not necessarily incompatible and may positively serve different students, depending on their individual learning styles (József 13); similarly, each approach contains weaknesses which the other mitigates (Hyland, *Second Language Writing* 2). A product approach towards writing allows students to be exposed to different genres and produce their own text with confidence since a model that can be imitated was previously provided. This model provides ideas that students may want to pursue in their

own writing, minimizes the potential for error, and sets a clear objective for what the end result of the text should be.

In order to write successfully, students need to be taught the basics of writing and perform tasks centered on the final product, those of which may be aimed towards more structural aspects such as coherence and cohesion, how to organize ideas into paragraphs, how to connect sentences, and so on. This allows students to apply specific aspects of language and discourse to their ideas and may help develop language as students resolve problems they encounter through writing (Harmer, *How to Teach Writing* 31). However, although necessary, this approach and its guided style of writing can be seen as stifling of students' personal and creative potential, as they mimic a text and do not write truly independently (Harmer, *The Practice of English Language Teaching* 327).

This creative and personal potential is what process approaches claim writing tasks should arise from. Students are encouraged to collaborate with both peers and teachers in order to develop their ideas further and more can arise from brainstorming, mind mapping, or similar activities. Going through pre-writing activities can be helpful and motivating for students who feel anxious when asked to write, and the successive feedback received allows for students to reflect critically on their initial work (Nunan, *Language Teaching Methodology* 88). However, a process such as this takes more time than a product-oriented approach, and teachers may struggle at implementing it consistently due to time constraints and extensive curricula (Harmer, *The Practice of English Language Teaching* 326). Furthermore, process approaches constrict students mostly to narrative text types and do not allow for analyzing and learning specific genres which have fixed conventions that must be followed (Nunan, *Language Teaching Methodology* 87).

What approach to use depends on several factors, including students' language proficiency, their personalities, and even the type of text to be written. Indeed, there are specific types of text that may translate more easily into students' own reality which, regardless of the approach taken, may simultaneously prove more motivating but also more limiting in terms of creativity. Likewise, a writing task that may take place only in the classroom, equally regardless of which approach it was carried out through, may allow for specific processes of acquisition that would otherwise not be available to students while also possibly being less motivating for them (Nunan, *Designing Tasks* 40). Finally, how

students prefer to work and how they feel about writing production should also be something to consider. For some, gradually working on a text might provide more confidence; for others, task accomplishment and the feeling of realization that comes with it might be more benefic (Harmer, *The Practice of English Language Teaching* 326). In my practicum, the feasibility of using both approaches in conjunction, as well as different purposes for writing, was tested.

2.3. Tasks

As no single approach can serve all students, the same can be said for tasks and classroom dynamics concerning writing activities. Writing tasks designed to follow a product-based approach may help students who need more support to produce a text, but they may also limit creativity, autonomy, and the possibility for improvement. In the same way, a task designed to follow a process-based approach may encourage more creativity, but may not be realistic for students of all levels and personalities. This means there is no ideal formula to teach and practice writing, and that teachers should be flexible and use a variety of tasks, organized through different approaches and attending to different purposes, in order to provide different students with work that suits their needs and helps them overcome their difficulties and insecurities.

Besides what approach is taken, the purpose of a writing task is a meaningful factor that can contribute to how much students are motivated to do it and to how engaging and effective it is. A writing task may be used as a tool to allow for the practice of a specific aspect of language and reinforce it in students' minds, and prove useful in doing so (Harmer, *How to Teach Writing* 32). Similarly, writing is often used as an enabling activity, a step that facilitates student engagement in a larger, ongoing activity such as a speaking one. The purpose of these writing tasks is pedagogical, as its goal is to help students build the competencies and confidence required to, at a later stage, apply these writing skills in context elsewhere (Hyland, *Second Language Writing* 113).

When, instead, students are asked to complete a writing task considering a specific real-world application, language is the tool that is put at their service to accomplish that task. Writing for the purpose of writing (Harmer, *How to Teach Writing* 34) in this manner,

for real-life situations and for specific contexts students are bound to encounter in their own lives (Hyland, *Second Language Writing* 113), makes clear to students that the intention of learning a language, and learning how to communicate well in this language through writing, in this case specifically, is a matter of value in and of itself.

While writing tasks vary on how they are organized according to what they are meant to focus on and the approach to be followed. Teachers must take in consideration several factors when designing and preparing any task so that it is effective and provides students both language practice and a stimulating learning experience (Hyland, *Second Language Writing* 116). The tasks carried out and presented in this practicum had the intention of providing a rich context for purposeful writing activities, as well as enough scaffolding that allowed for weaker students to accomplish their tasks successfully. These tasks, as well as their results and impressions from students, will be discussed in chapter 3.

2.4. Feedback

As a writing task, or a stage of a writing task, is accomplished by students, their focus will turn to how their work was perceived by their readers, especially by the teacher due to the authority on providing a grade. Feedback is an essential component of the learning process and written feedback specifically can have a substantial impact on how students regard their work and any issues that need be addressed in it.

There are alternatives to the practice of providing feedback in written form, as some feel that students, rather than analyzing their work and the teacher's comments and corrections by themselves, benefit more from the immediacy of looking at their mistakes and acting on them with the teacher's guidance in person (Harmer, *How to Teach English* 110). One such alternative is the face-to-face writing conference, which involves the teacher and the student discussing the work and what improvements can be made together. This alternative to written feedback may prove productive as it promotes negotiation and cooperation between both writer and reader, allowing both the teacher to further clarify ideas and concepts to students, and students to deepen their understanding of how their writing is perceived (Ferris 20).

While opinions on which is more efficient differ, both oral and written feedback are present in most ESL classrooms. Technology has played an essential role in making available new methods that teachers can rely on to provide feedback to students (Ferris 20), such as leaving comments on Word documents, e-mails, and even exchanging recorded comments. Regardless of the preferred system, what remains undisputed is that a teacher's response to a student's written work has a significant impact on their learning and performance levels.

2.4.1. The teacher's focus

It is established that feedback is a valuable contribution to the development of students' writing abilities, and grades are important as they are a specific measure for students to guide themselves by on their progression. Understanding how to provide useful feedback and fair assessment is crucial to help students improve their writing (Hyland, *Second Language Writing* 212), but knowing exactly what to focus on when faced with a written task done by a student has been considered a challenging issue.

Before the 1990s, teachers viewed themselves primarily as language teachers and, consequently, focused mostly on students' language errors and often failed to provide feedback to students based on other aspects such as organization, cohesion, coherence, creativity, and ideas. By focusing so strongly on how accurately students used language, teachers would often fail to address critical structure and content-related problems. Additionally, most teachers did not consider providing feedback and suggestions on written texts as fundamental. At that time, process-oriented approaches to writing were not well-developed and widespread, and it would not be sensible or useful to provide concrete feedback and suggestions on pieces of work which students had completed and were final. Most teachers did so only when justifying a grade (Ferris 21).

There is no denying that accuracy in writing is important because mistakes can fossilize in students' minds as they fall into habits of using incorrect language and are unable to change easily (Ferris 156). Being able to write English correctly is important for students who intend to further their education in university as they are likely to be required to produce written assignments, as well as for those who intend to begin working immediately after school, as communication becomes more and more common in English through

written means such as email. As discussed before, those who express themselves fluently as well as accurately are seen as more competent and professional and, potentially, taken more seriously and provided with more opportunities (Weigle 5).

Communicative Language Teaching proposes a positive approach to mistakes and errors, for example, noting these but not correcting, which significantly changes the way we may give written feedback, especially when considering writing as a process that requires different steps until a final product is achieved (Ferris 23). As students write, their ideas might mature and change and they may wish to add, remove or even reorganize content as their own understanding of what they are writing about progresses. If students are encouraged to be critical about their own work and improve on their initial ideas, then focusing on grammar at this point may prove a waste of time, as further revisions will likely polish the linguistic aspect of the text. More than a waste of time, premature attention to writing mistakes may affect students' ability to make significant changes to their writing styles (Ferris 23). Receiving a piece of written work filled with notes focusing solely on language mistakes may lead students to see and focus on their text as a series of sentences which must be corrected, as opposed to a unit with communicative intent (Ferris 21; Harmer, *How to Teach English* 120).

As process-based approaches to writing became more common, new perspectives in how teachers should address written work-in-progress emerged. Some defended that teachers should establish priorities depending on whether the work they are looking at is a draft, a revision, or the final product (Ferris 22). In this case, teachers should be selective and provide feedback based on what stage the student is at and what their critical needs for improvement are. This could mean, for instance, only providing feedback on content and organization in the first draft and addressing language mistakes only in a second version (Harmer, *How to Teach Writing* 110).

Another viewpoint suggests that teachers should simultaneously respond to and correct written tasks (Harmer, *How to Teach Writing* 108). Correcting would aim for a focus on language, by underlining misspelled words, crossing out incorrect verb tenses, or writing short comments on the margins for instance. Responding to students' work would imply commenting on what the student meant to say, providing suggestions, asking for clarification, or indicating where enhancements are needed. In this case, the teacher is not

only an examiner and evaluator, but also the audience who receives the text and provides qualitative feedback.

2.4.2. Student perception

A teacher's reaction to a written task can shape a student's attitude towards the foreign language. An enthusiastic response from the teacher may encourage students to want to continue developing their texts, whereas vague comments might leave students unsure as to how to proceed. Likewise, receiving work filled with notes focusing solely on language mistakes and with no acknowledgment of content can be dismaying (Harmer, *How to Teach Writing* 108).

It is not easy to find a balance because, just as teachers must have concrete intentions on what aspects to concentrate on while providing feedback on students' written tasks, students themselves, in particular at this level, will also have their own preferences and expectations on how their teachers should address the work they have done (Hyland, *Second Language Writing* 41). Students who have never been exposed to a process-based approach to writing may be confused as to how to improve their work when they already see it as the finished version. Similarly, students who are used to having their written tasks only corrected without any feedback on structure and content may find suggestions addressing content challenging. Instances in which the perspectives and expectations from both parties clash are bound to happen and teachers must be tactful when providing feedback.

Teachers must be accurate and truthful in their corrections and responses, but there is also the issue of how those will affect students, their self-esteem and motivation to continue working on their difficulties (Harmer, *How to Teach English* 120). Feedback which feels frank but considerate can encourage students towards writing, as it is gratifying to receive individual attention from the teacher, especially considering there are usually few opportunities for it in class. This manifestation of attention not only provides students with specific aspects they must improve and strategies they could apply in order to do so, it can also transmit encouragement and trust that they are capable of improving, developing self-confidence and a positive self-concept.

It is important that, on top of correcting students' mistakes, teachers provide this sort of response that does not necessarily appraise students' writing but that can still teach and reinforce effective writing practices and behaviors (Hyland, "Sugaring the pill"). Students must be made aware of the negative aspects of their writing, but teachers must respond with consideration as to how their words may impact students' morale.

Some teachers have embraced the practice of delivering feedback to students in the form of a suggestion, which allows avoiding direct critique. Instead, suggestions foster a feeling of cooperation and students can regard such suggestions as proposals for improvement. Apart from suggestions, teachers can also use hedges while appraising students' performance levels. Hedges are linguistic devices which allow for the expression of polite uncertainty and can play an essential role in softening the force of criticism (Hyland, "Sugaring the pill").

Essentially, having one's piece of writing seen by a teacher should not be a confidence-destroying ordeal. When students feel like their work is respected and considered in its different forms, they can accept the teacher's feedback much more easily and can feel more motivated to improve their work, rather than just feeling overwhelmed and putting it away (Harmer, *How to Teach English* 122).

3. Supervised Teaching Practice

In this chapter, the result of combining the theory with the practice of teaching writing will be discussed. The context in which the practicum took place is described, and the methodology used to reflect on the issues surrounding writing explained. Finally, some of the different tasks implemented will be displayed.

3.1. Context

3.1.1. The school

The Secondary School with Third Cycle Romeu Correia is located in Feijó, a municipality of Almada, and it is the main school of the Romeu Correia cluster of schools. This school owes its name to a writer whose works often showcased social and economic issues, some of which are prevalent today as the majority of the population belongs to the lower middle class. Specifically, 84% of the population works in the tertiary sector and the majority (22%) has only reached the second cycle of basic education (Câmara Municipal de Almada).

In the 2018/2019 school year, 1673 students were enrolled in Romeu Correia. About 35% of students (596) benefited from governmental financial help with their education, receiving meals, coursebooks, school material and transportation passes either for free or at a lower cost. Additionally, a school group-wide project, Ecosol, supports students of low-income families. To further improve its students' chances, the school underwent construction work in 2008, and now offers good working conditions and all the necessary infrastructures for the functioning of school activities. The school has 20 classrooms, all equipped with a computer and a projector, and some of which equipped with a smartboard.

3.1.2. Supervision

This practicum took place under the guidance of Professor Luz Baião. Upon our first meeting, it was determined that both student-teachers would spend about twenty hours in the school per week, according to NOVA FCSH Practicum regulations. In the first term, these hours were spent shadowing Professor Luz Baião. At first, this meant mostly observing her

lessons; later, we would take an active part in her class direction, the Citizenship subject, as well as participate in parent/teacher conferences, department meetings and end-of-term meetings for each class.

Besides observing, both student-teachers were assigned one class in particular which they would accompany more closely and eventually teach in the second and third terms. As such, I was assigned class 10th B1. It was also agreed that both student-teachers would spend some time with 3rd cycle level teachers and their classes. I was assigned the class 7th G under teacher Edna Guerreiro.

3.1.3. Class 10th B1

This was the class with which I worked the most throughout my practicum. This Sciences and Technologies course class was composed of twenty-eight students, sixteen boys and twelve girls, most of which fifteen years old as expected in this level. One student had been repeating the 10th year because her chosen course did not correspond to her initial expectations and, by the end of the year, seven more students would either fail or choose to change courses as well. Nevertheless, 28 students attended the English classes regularly, as English is a mandatory subject in every course.

This was a mixed level group, with the majority of students being able to understand spoken English but having difficulty in participating in English in class. However, even those who seemed more comfortable with the language were often very quiet and reluctant to ask questions or participate. It did not seem they were uninterested in the subject, as they paid attention and participated when prompted. With time, I understood that these students were simply not used to participating actively during lessons, and did not know exactly how to do it. They seemed to be very immature, and equate being silent with being well behaved.

Concerning student behavior, there were different opinions among the teachers. In their English lessons, whether they were being taught at first by Professor Luz Baião or, later, by myself, students were orderly and respectful. The remaining teachers, however, often reported their discontent with the students' playfulness during lessons and inappropriate attitudes. Additionally, in all subjects including English, students often arrived

late, a habit which systematically prevented teachers from beginning their lessons on time and undermined the quality of their lessons as they would be constantly interrupted by students entering the classroom. At the end of the second term, the class had made considerable improvements to their behavior, though punctuality would remain an issue until the end of the school year.

3.1.4. Class 7th G

This group was composed of twenty-seven students, twenty boys and seven girls, with ages ranging from eleven to sixteen years old. Several students had been held back one or more years during their schooling, and four were repeating the seventh grade.

I only began work with these students in the second term and had very few lessons with them, but immediately understood that this was a very heterogeneous class in many different ways. While most students seemed to have positive results on their tests, when questioned, they did not consider themselves good at the subject. Not all students could participate during lessons in English, some because they did not possess the required vocabulary to do so, others because they lacked confidence; a small group did not manage to follow the tasks along at all without extensive simplification and even use of L1 from the teacher.

Despite this, students were very receptive to my lessons. They were curious as to who the people observing their lessons were and, as I began teaching and explained to them what a student-teachers was, they seemed to want to help me so the lessons would go well. As much as possible, students cooperated in the activities suggested and showed interest in learning.

3.1.5. Other classes

Besides the two classes I taught, I observed many others and occasionally taught or assisted Professor Luz Baião or my colleague in their own classes, in particular 11th A3 and 11th B1, having taught one lesson by myself to the latter. Teacher Mónia Martins, another teacher with 3rd cycle and secondary classes, allowed us to observe and teach her groups as

well, specifically 9th B and 11th TAI2. Although I did not work as closely with these groups as I did with 10th B1, my observations in the rest of this report will include my experience and impressions with these classes as well.

3.2. Methodology

The primary objective of practica in teaching courses is for teaching student-teachers to apply the scientific, pedagogical, didactic and methodological knowledge they have acquired during the first year of their Master's to the reality of teaching actual students with varying needs, behaviors, motivations and learning levels. When faced with a real school context, the links between theory and practice become clearer for those who are new to teaching. New challenges which had not been anticipated and can only be perceived in a classroom become apparent as well.

Considering these characteristics and objectives, a cyclical process of action research (Nunan, "Action Research") in order to address the issues surrounding writing in English as a second language was carried out. Action research is "a form of self-reflective enquiry [...] in order to improve the rationality and justice of [one's] own practices, their understanding of those practices and the situations in which the practices are carried out" (Carr & Kemmis 162). This methodology is often used in education, where teachers act as researchers as they identify problematic issues to explore as they teach. Because it allows researchers to autonomously act on their findings and results, teachers who use this method are able to critically analyze their own practice and solve specific problems in their own classrooms.

The first step into this method through a practicum, naturally, would be to observe other teachers perform. Observing more experienced teachers allows student-teachers not only to witness someone else's actual implementation of the theory they've learned, but also to have someone guide them through the planning, teaching, and assessment of their own lessons. Following this process, new teachers can experience a silent phase in which they reflect critically on what they have studied and on what they are observing, and adapt these ideas to how they intend to teach.

It became apparent very quickly that observing and taking notes of all the complex processes that occur in a classroom is a challenging task. As much as possible, Professor Luz

Baião would let us know when she would be working on an activity related to our research topics, and that made creating observation tasks (Wajnryb) and taking very specific notes easier. Activities and tasks in which writing was produced were observed, registered and then analyzed, so that I could try potential solutions for improving writing production during my supervised teaching to take place during the second term.

3.3. Pedagogical activities

As the second term approached, the time came to begin planning and applying my own lessons considering theory and the curriculum to be followed. The lesson plans and activities implemented were always discussed with Professor Luz Baião prior to implementation in class. The tasks are addressed in the chronological order in which they were carried out, and any students referred to are named through initials.

3.3.1. Writing feedback

Feedback was a type of written homework that Professor Luz Baião had been implementing in her assessment of students for some years. For this homework, students would write and e-mail us a document in which they would summarize what happened in a specific lesson – a lesson which they would choose themselves – reviewing what was learned and explaining any key concepts, as well as provide their opinion on the lesson, justifying what parts or tasks they considered the most – or least – interesting and productive.

Figure 1 is an example of a process-based writing task, in which students would write their feedback and receive a grade, but then have the opportunity to improve their work according to the feedback received, and the grade would also be reviewed. Occasionally, students were asked to write a third version of their homework. Because students were allowed to alter and improve their work, many mistakes or shortcomings were not fixed by the teacher. Rather, suggestions were given so that students would correct and develop the work by themselves.

Feedback on 41st and 42nd Lessons

In the forty-first and forty-second lessons we answered the question "What are you missing?" After that we read a poem entitled "The Good Old Days" and commented on the polysemic words in it. At the end we saw eight images that were connected to technology and showed it as a double-edged sword that we needed to point it out.

First, to answer the question above, we said that we are missing interpersonal skills, that means we are missing eye-contact, physical contact, verbal communication, basically everything that means face-to-face interactions. After reading the poem, the teacher told us to say the polysemic words, words with two or more meanings, that we can find ? ?. We found eighteen polysemic words, the words that I found more interesting were, "compress" (make smaller or reduce its size), "virus" (health issue or a malicious software) and "crash" (a collision or when the computer stops unexpectedly). I found it interesting that the meanings of the eighteen words are really similar, people just find another way of using a word.

I liked this class, even though I already knew about the fact that we are missing interpersonal skills. It made me think about me and the way I act, it also made me want to change. I also liked learning the polysemic words, I noticed that we make words polysemic by using them in other contexts. I'll try to be more creative and do that.

Your feedback is very complete N! I appreciate that you reflected on the things you learnt. For instance, you didn't just learn about polysemic words, you reflected on how we adapt already existing words to new contexts. Thinking deeper about what we learn is a great habit to develop as a student, and as a person!

In terms of writing, I thought your first paragraph was a bit confusing. Long sentences are not necessarily bad, but you need to use punctuation to separate your ideas. For instance: "...polysemic words in it; at the end, we saw eight images..." do you see how the pauses make more sense? It's still one sentence since you are making a list of activities, but there's a clearer separation now.

In terms of ICT, take a look at the document teacher Luz sent at the beginning of the year. Your paragraph spacing is wrong.

Right now, it's good.

Commented [MOU1]: Titles appear in *italics* on the computer, or underlined when you are writing by hand.

Commented [MOU2]: Revise the sentence structure and content as it makes no sense.

Commented [MOU3]: No comma before you start listing something. If you want a pause, try a colon!

Fig. 1. An example of a piece of feedback sent in by student NT, together with my correction and response

On the student's text itself, occasionally, mistakes were corrected by the teacher and highlighted in green so the student would know something was changed for them. This was used for language mistakes that the student might not be able to correct easily on his/her own, such as prepositional verbs which had not been revised yet, as seen in figure 1. Red highlight was used to indicate that something was wrong, content or form-wise. When there was a word or punctuation missing, a red question mark would be added as well. In order to clarify what the student might have to address, lateral comments were added.

Finally, there was a comment by the teacher with a more personal response designed to improve specific writing habits which seemed to be lacking in the text, but also to improve motivation and encourage students to continue the writing process. At the end, there would be the qualitative grade for that work, and students could follow the written

production grading scale ([appendix 2](#)) – which had been made available to them at the beginning of the school year – to ponder the different parameters being considered to help them improve their English, as well as their final grade.

The last grade, the one received after the improved version or versions of the homework were seen by the teacher, would be the only one considered. Working on their writing not only helped students develop their language skills, but it also served this more practical purpose as well. For students who did all their homework and made use of the possibility to improve, this could translate into one more point in the end-of-term grade.

There was also an ICT component to this homework as there were several guidelines students had to follow when writing and submitting their work. Files had to be named according to a model, and so the first student on the roster of class 10th B1 would have to name their first feedback “1_10B1_feedback1”. There were specific text formatting guidelines too, concerning text alignment and spacing as well as font type and size. While this is not directly associated with writing practice, it is important that students are taught concrete ICT skills and become comfortable with the more technical aspects of writing on a computer. This is a transversal competence to all subjects.

This type of work was important in more than one way. It allowed us to evaluate and assess every student’s written expression as well as their respective evolution throughout the school year. Opinions from students on this type of work were divided, however, as can be seen in this question from a survey ([appendix 1](#)) taken at the end of the second term.

I consider individual written tasks, whether at home or in class, ...
28 responses

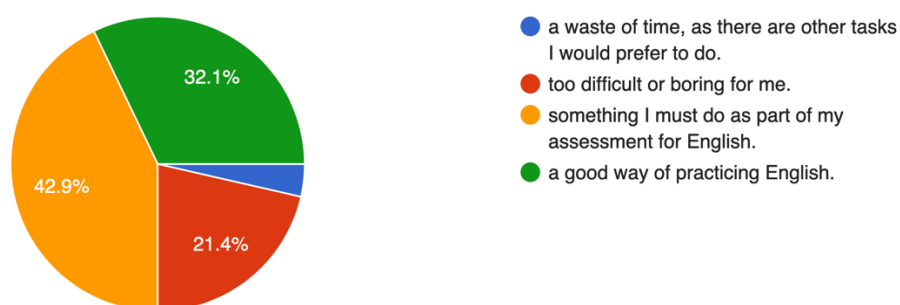


Fig. 2. Survey question to 10th B1 on individual writing tasks

The majority of students (twelve) considered writing as an assignment, something they had to do to pass the subject. Six students also replied that these writing tasks were either too difficult or too boring. This is not surprising as writing is a time-consuming and arduous task, and many students lose motivation or simply do not understand the point of such tasks when they do not see immediate results in their fluency or accurate use of the language.

One student replied that he considered these tasks a waste of time. This student had never written a piece of feedback until that point – and he would never do so until the end of the year – so, at the beginning of the 3rd term, I spoke to RP privately and asked what sort of tasks he would rather do, as his opinion might help and give me better ideas for the future. He answered that he simply did not like the course or the school he was in, and that he would be changing to a professional course in a different school the following year.

More encouragingly, nine students recognized that this sort of work was a good way to practice and improve their English. Nearing the end of the third term, two students, LR and RC, came to speak to me about feedback they had written. They wanted to know how the negative grade they had both received on their work might affect their final grade. I explained how, and expressed my surprise at how short and rushed their work was. Until this point, these two students had been gradually improving their grades in this type of work, and so they justified their negative grades with lack of time since they had many tests and assignments the week the feedback was due. I showed my disappointment but understood their situation and asked, regardless of this particular result on this piece of feedback, whether they felt this type of work had helped them. They both expressed that they had never written so much in English before or practiced the language so much in class, and believed their language skills had improved significantly since the beginning of the year.

RC added that she felt more motivated to write and rewrite her work because the comments she received were so detailed and personal. In retrospect, this makes sense, as the different stages that constituted this type of process-based homework was the one in which I provided students the most individual attention. Besides, the feedback provided to their work addressed all language mistakes but also acknowledged students' ideas. Like RC, the majority – though not all – were often eager to take the opportunity to improve the second version of their work.

Sometimes, I am allowed to improve my written tasks. I think this improvement work is...

28 responses

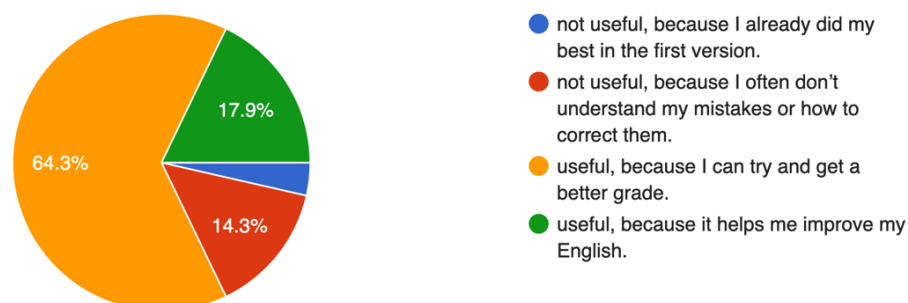


Fig. 3. Survey question to 10th B1 on improving a text

The majority of students (eighteen) considered the process of rewriting and improving their work useful because it allowed them to get better grades. Five others would think the same but justify how it helped them practice English. Grades are important for students as they are a form of validation of their work, as well as considered for their future in the case of those interested in pursuing their studies in higher education.

Five students did not think rewriting their work was useful, four of which because they often did not understand how to improve their work. This concerned me in particular as it showed that the feedback provided was not being as efficient as it could be. Feedback which does not help students improve is not only a waste of time as it does not serve its most basic purpose, but also potentially damaging for students who may feel as if they are unable to improve due to their own inability.

At the beginning of the third term, I privately spoke to student SS, one of the four who had responded she did not understand how to improve her work, and asked her how she thought I could be clearer when trying to help students with my corrections and responses. SS said that she usually could not understand the red highlights when there was no accompanying lateral comment explaining what was wrong. She added that, even if the comments were included, they were sometimes too vague and she left her mistakes as they were because she could not understand what to change. I went and looked more closely at SS's pieces of feedback from the first term and found some different instances in which a weaker student might feel at a loss on how to improve. The following are two examples.

We also learned what is culture shock.

Lateral comment: *It's not a question; so the structure is S + V + O*

*I would also like to follow the area of science in the future, **being a more complicated.***

In both cases, the mistakes were highlighted in red. The first one shows a grammatical mistake and included a lateral comment explaining the correct sentence structure. The second example shows a fragmented sentence that neither Professor Luz Baião nor myself could understand, but no lateral comment. In these two examples, both with or without a comment, SS could not understand what was wrong with what we highlighted for her and was unable to improve her writing.

With these examples and what she had said in mind, I tried to make my feedback more detailed. The following is an example from SS's last feedback on the third term.

*Teacher Ana asked us what **would be the best title for that table** (1) and we ended up **coining** (2) that it would be the media.*

Lateral comment 1: This structure is for a question, but you are declaring what was said. Look at this example and try to correct your sentence: "What is your name?" She asked me what my name was.

Lateral comment 2: "*Coining a term*" means you invent it. Try and choose a better word here.

The feedback provided here was more comprehensive and intended to guide the student more closely towards how to improve. It was also worded more carefully with suggestions and hedges considering the conversation I had had with the student. It is worthwhile to note that SS repeated the same mistake she had made in the first term regarding sentence structure when reporting a question, which means she did not learn the

grammatical rule in that instance. However, with more specific comments, as shown above, she was able to correct herself and achieved her highest grade on a feedback assignment.

Providing very specific feedback and addressing every correction made may not be ideal. Students may feel disheartened as they look at their text covered in notes from the teacher. The opposite may also happen, in particular for stronger students who may not be challenged enough as they go through the teacher's extensive notes as if through a list.

When correcting my written work, I think my teacher should...

28 responses

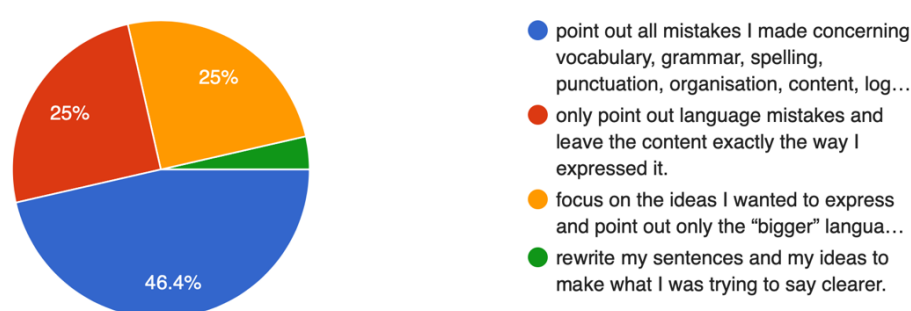


Fig. 4. Survey question to 10th B1 on feedback preferences

Students have different preferences on how teachers should correct and respond to their written work. The majority of 10th B1 prefers having every aspect pointed out to them, but it is important to consider the remaining fifteen students who either prefer the teacher to focus on helping them improve their content and leave minor language mistakes for later or, in contrast, focus on language and leave the content exactly as it is. A balance must be found, and this is easier in cases such as the one described, in which the teacher can get to know their students and use strategies adapted to their specific needs.

This type of work was helpful in that it provided me insight into my students' strengths and weaknesses, and it also allowed me to assess the impact of my own work, both in terms of content and methodology. One of the points students had to address on their feedback was whether they considered the lesson useful and interesting and what tasks were more productive for their learning.

Overall, I saw this class as a really helpful one, since we were able to explore such different sides of something as simple as technology and learn about the way people used to live before inventions like mobile phones and computers. If there was something I could add to this class, it would be a discussion about whether the world would be a better place with or without technology.

On a lesson about technology from the beginning of the second term ([appendix 3](#)) which focused primarily on oral interaction, feedback such as this by student LP provided important information on what motivates students. While not all will enjoy the same topics and the same strategies employed by the teacher, recognizing and acknowledging how they prefer to learn and valuing their experiences can influence their attitude towards the subject and, ultimately, their performance and results. Not only that, this type of written activity creates an atmosphere of cooperation between teachers and students and leads to a more positive dynamic in the classroom.

Many students like LP expressed that they value discussing topics orally during lessons or in small groups. Students appreciate being challenged and questioned on their opinions and beliefs and provided with opportunities that make them reflect on how they see the world around them. This is beneficial for the development of critical thinking skills and will also bring advantages for any writing tasks that follow the discussions.

Writing seems to be easier when...
28 responses

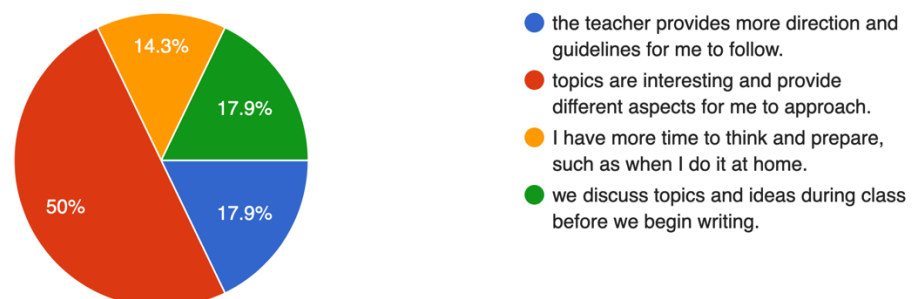


Fig. 5. Survey question to 10th B1 on when writing feels easier

Students find writing easier when they consider the topics interesting and easy to approach, and students from the class 10th B1 also cited thinking of what to write about as their main difficulty. Exposing students to authentic and relevant materials during lessons and engaging them to think about and to discuss issues in depth makes it so writing becomes more effortless. When students enjoy lessons and feel like they were designed with relevant topics and discussions that require their opinions and needs in mind, they may work harder and be more persistent in developing this skill. A writing task after a lesson such as this is likely to yield more positive results.

The most difficult thing about writing any text is...
28 responses

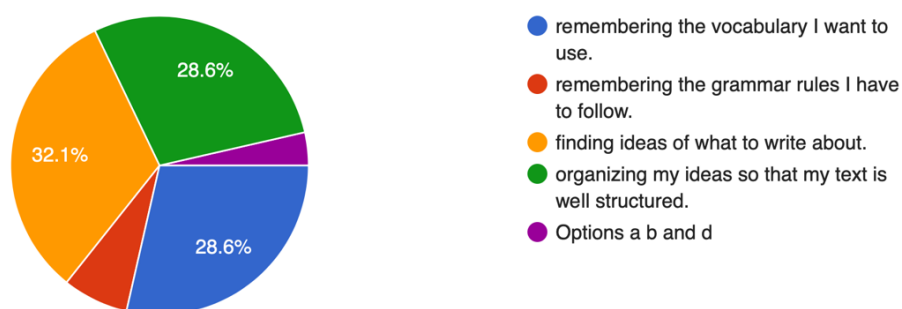


Fig. 6. Survey question to 10th B1 on the obstacles of writing

This sort of homework fell perfectly within the topic of this report, and it provided me ample opportunities to see how students struggled with this skill, how certain methodologies could facilitate its development, and how efficient the feedback techniques I learned about could be. The majority of students improved their English skills, throughout the year – quantitatively considering their grades – and this habit of consistently writing and rewriting a text every month certainly provided students with enough practice that contributed to their progress.

3.3.2. Writing an informal email with slang

This writing task was done as homework following a lesson ([appendix 4](#)) on the topic *The World of Technology* (Ministério da Educação 25) which was bridging the topic *Young*

people in the global era (Ministério da Educação 26). Following the discussion about how the English language has been changing because of technology, students were taught common abbreviations, acronyms, and informal English expressions. Students seemed to understand that, with technology and the media, the way they talk amongst themselves is more visible now, and that even expressions which are used mostly regionally in English-speaking countries have become global because of how widespread communication is. Students shared several expressions they knew and learned others.

At the end of the lesson, students were asked to write me an email using the vocabulary and expressions they learned or shared in class, telling me about their day, giving me their opinion on the day's lesson, or anything they felt was appropriate. Two examples of the emails received follow.

FYI, my feedback is almost finished. IDK if it's ready tomorrow but I'll try to send it ASAP. BTW, I really liked the class today.

Hello teacher, I loved today's class, it was cool beans! However, I think that I'm going to miss the next class because sometimes it is dry, ahahahaha jk, ofc I won't do it, I love learning English and every language. Tbh, I think that I'm going to start learning Chinese asap because imo it is super cool and yolo. Bye teacher, cya on thursday!

At the end of the following lesson, the messages sent by students MB and JP, and others, were projected and read aloud. It was a lighthearted moment in which students got to show their sense of humor and laugh together with the teachers. Some students who had not sent me the email asked if they still could; they were told those emails would not be read in class but that I would be happy to read and reply.

The fun aspect of the task is clear as students would not usually communicate with their teacher using this register and vocabulary, and perhaps not even with each other to the same extent as they would in their native language. There was no feedback provided for

these texts, and no chance to improve the work. There were no grades provided; the homework was marked only as either sent in or not. This writing activity was meant solely to allow students a unique opportunity to use vocabulary that they otherwise might not and have a simple task in which they used writing for fun.

3.3.3. Writing a resumé

This activity was not designed or implemented by myself, but I include it here because I got to observe and interact with students as they accomplished it and, thus, got some insight on how they worked in pairs and small groups and on how they perceived it to be important. This task was done during a set of two lessons taught by my colleague student-teachers Ilina Cardoso to the 11th B1 class, under the topic *The World of Work* (Ministério da Educação 28), in which students were asked to write a cover letter and a resumé considering a job offer she had made available to them.

Having discussed what they knew about job seeking and the necessary steps and documents, students were shown an example of a cover letter and a resumé, which were analyzed so as to clarify characteristics of each document. Students identified the information and register used in the letter, as well as the layout and aspects listed in the resumé, speculating on the reasoning behind each component, why it might be relevant for an employer, and noting how the candidates expressed themselves to increase their chances of being selected.

Students were then shown an advertisement they were to apply for in groups of four. Together, they invented a candidate and discussed what his/her background would be. Afterwards, students started writing, two of the students focusing on the cover letter, and the other two on the resumé. They were allowed to use their mobile phones for vocabulary and any other information they needed. As they worked, teacher Ilina Cardoso, Professor Luz Baião, and myself went around the room providing help and offering suggestions.

The first part of the task posed no problem for the students. Every group enthusiastically created a plan with bullet points describing their character. These lists were very general and unpolished, as they were only meant as guidelines for the cover letter and resumé to be in accordance, and would not be handed in for formal evaluation. Students

did not seem to need help but, as I approached, asked me whether I thought their ideas for the character were good or relevant for the job vacancy shown.

As they began to work in pairs, students who were working on the cover letters seemed to have some difficulty structuring their text, and most questions regarded how to move from one topic to another while still making the letter seem coherent while following their writing plan. As for the pairs who were working on the resumé, students' questions focused mostly on how to phrase their ideas more concisely and formally, maintaining cohesion.

This writing task feels close to a real-world scenario in which the vast majority of students will find themselves in a close future. Preparing students to solve realistic tasks that have relevance to their lives not only makes them more motivated to work, since they can see the point of the tasks, it also brings benefits that go beyond language learning. I asked to read any feedback written by students on this lesson, and it appears students understand this. In her feedback, student ML realizes the importance of learning real-life skills in school and she mentions that it was useful to create a cover letter and a resumé rather than just learning about them as well.

To sum up, I believe these lessons were very useful, because instead of just saying what we should do, we're given concrete examples. It's also worrying to think most people don't learn these basic things at school and they're forced to learn it the hardest way, when they need to apply for university or a job. In my opinion, the education system should focus more on these practical aspects of adulthood, not only related to the world of work but also related to taxes and all those things.

The objective of this writing activity was to allow students to write for a practical, specific purpose, using formal English as a tool to achieve that task. In what concerns approaches, I found very interesting that the task was neither fully product nor process-oriented. Students were shown a text which they analyzed and mimicked when writing their own. Although this may somewhat suppress creativity, it was a logical way to proceed as certain text genres, such as these specific documents, have explicit rules or conventions they must follow. There was collaborative and creative work as well as all members of the group had to agree on the ideal candidate and on different ways to make them stand out.

While students presented their candidate and respective work in class, teacher Ilina Cardoso took notes using the oral presentation grading scale ([appendix 5](#)). Then, students received verbal feedback from the three teachers. While the presentation itself was assessed, students were also told they should type their work in the computer at home and send it in. Their resumés and cover letters would be assessed following the descriptors for written production ([appendix 2](#)) and, afterwards, students could improve it based on the feedback they received.

3.3.4. Writing a poem

For World Poetry Day, celebrated on the 21st of March, I was allowed to organize a school-wide activity with different tasks that different English teachers could implement with their own classes ([appendix 6](#)). I decided to make this activity as inclusive and open as possible so that teachers of different cycles and levels could participate in the way that they considered most suitable to their students. Some of the tasks suggested were reading and analyzing poetry in class or reciting poems expressively for different audiences in the school, among others. Activities which focused on written production were suggested as well, in the form of having students write a poem on whatever topic was currently being approached in class, for instance, with the help of written or visual prompts.

There were no specific guidelines on how to implement these tasks; I wanted teachers to be free to implement them through a product or process-based approach, and to assess the results as they considered suitable. That I am aware of, no English teachers decided to have students produce poetry on their own; rather, teachers preferred to commemorate the day by including the reading of a poem in their lessons, either one chosen and shared by me, or one that they knew of themselves.

Some teachers, however, decided not to participate at all. One teacher explained that she did not have time to spare from her lessons as she was already behind considering how close the end of the term was. Using poetry or any literature in general when teaching English as a second language still tends to be considered difficult and time-consuming. However, there is flexibility in how teachers may address the different topics in the

curriculum, as well as a great variety of literary texts suggested for that purpose, but teachers tend to resist the opportunity to explore literary texts in EFL.

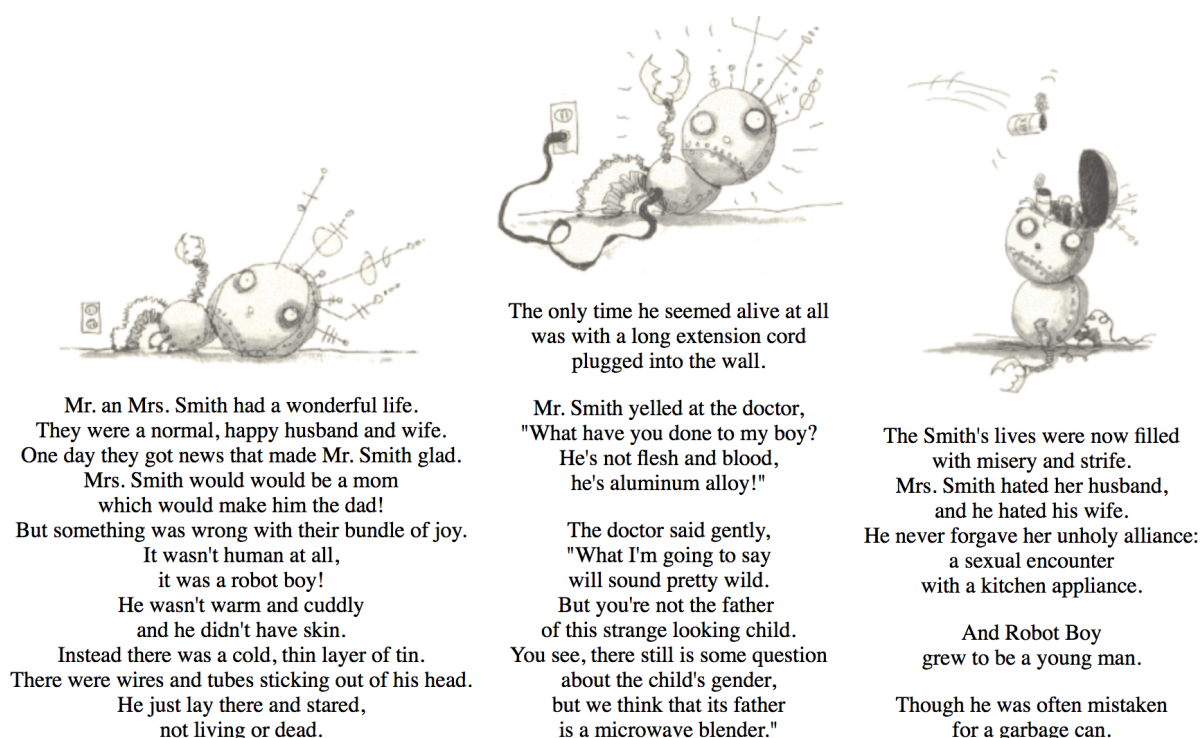


Fig. 7. One of the poems sent to teachers and displayed in the school, "Robot Boy" by Tim Burton

The lesson ([appendix 7](#)) that was put together as a preparation for World Poetry Day for 10th B1 came in the sequence of a discussion on values and ethics arising from the topic *The media and global communication* (Ministério da Educação 26). It began with students watching a video created for a poem entitled *People need people* by Benjamin Zephaniah. Not knowing the name of the poem and with the audio turned off, students speculated and guessed on what the images could mean. Only then did they watch the video again but with the poem being recited. Students easily interpreted the poem, contrasting their new ideas with the ones they had before listening to it, and associated several values with the text.

Students were then asked to write their own poems in small groups. After choosing a value they wanted to reflect on, students were to write a poem in which they either described or illustrated that value in some way. There were no guidelines given on how long the poem had to be or whether it had to rhyme. Students were also allowed to use their

mobile phones for vocabulary. Then, Professor Luz Baião, teacher Ilina Cardoso and I went around the room as the groups worked on their poems.

Finding a value to write about seemed easy for them, but students showed great reluctance when beginning to write the poem. They complained that they had no ideas and refused many suggestions from their group members because they felt their poems would not be good, which seemed natural considering that they were not used to reading, discussing, or writing poetry in English. They overcame this reluctance with some encouragement and all groups had a finished poem by the end of the lesson.

Writing tends to be seen as an individual process, but working this skill through pair or group work can be efficient as well. There are more people thinking and contributing to the task and that will mean there are more ideas on what to say, more options on how to begin, and less stress overall in addressing the writing activity. This was ideal for a creative activity such as writing a poem, which can be challenging enough in one's own native language, let alone in a second language.

Feedback was provided as students wrote and teachers reached their groups, and the work was corrected and improved immediately. Most issues present were language-related; otherwise, being such a creative and free task, there was not much in terms of content that could be considered wrong. Suggestions were given on how to make certain sentences flow better and more appropriate vocabulary was recommended but, for the most part, students initial choices and approaches prevailed.

*This poem is about
A little blue bird
That made his way out
From all the bad things he heard.
In an endless stray
So fast, as if in a race,
The bird flew far away
With a smile on his face.*

This poem created by students DQ and JF was about peace of mind. These two students developed their own idea and how they wanted to portray it, but wanted their poem to rhyme and, so, that was their biggest difficulty. Because students are allowed to use their phones for vocabulary, I told them there were rhyming dictionaries online that they could find, and that was enough for them to finish the verses they were having problems with. I also asked these students if they thought the bird should be referred to as "he" or maybe as "it," a discreet suggestion towards a linguistic change I thought would be more appropriate. JF replied that, since the bird represented a person, they thought it should be referred to as "he," which I accepted.

I thought that it was interesting that students put so much thought into an activity which they considered silly and difficult at first. This may have been because they felt personally invested in the task, as they could relate to it. After all, students chose the topic for the poems themselves and had discussed the importance of several values beforehand. At the end of the lesson, I told students that the poems would be displayed in the school for World Poetry Day and that, if any group did not want their poem to be read by others or wanted to remain anonymous, to let me know. No one asked, and so the poems were displayed.

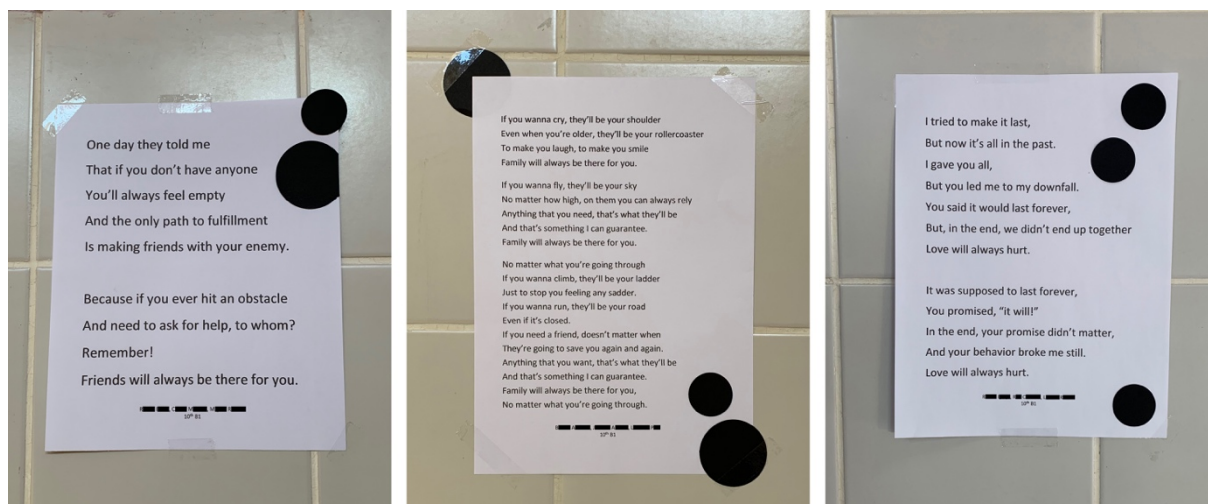


Fig. 8. Three poems written by 10th B1 students

3.3.5. Writing in groups

In the second and third term, instead of having two written tests, students had one test and were asked to write a paper and to present it orally. This served several purposes. It forced students to delve deeper into the topics they were working on and it provided them with practice into the organization and cooperation necessary for successful group work. By writing an entire paper themselves and then improving it after receiving feedback, students worked their language skills much more than they would in a test as well. Unbeknownst to them, this sort of assessment was also meant to help improve final grades. A paper, because it is done without the same time pressure as a written test and with access to different resources, may be a fairer way of measuring how much a student has worked and learned and, following a product-based approach, allows for improvement after an initial version has been handed in.

As for myself, this assessment allowed me to see how students work together in writing tasks outside the classroom. During lessons, this poses no problem. Students enjoy working in more dynamic ways and sharing their work with each other. In their feedback, they often mention this, together with the fact they rarely get to do so in other subjects. However, a paper is more demanding and requires other organizational and interpersonal skills. The importance of this task was also different from those done in class, as it would count as a test in students' final grades.

I noted immediately they did not like the prospect of working together. A few students asked if they would write the paper individually, and Professor Luz Baião and I had to intervene and help include some students into already formed groups. Although I had my suspicions as to their reasons, I did not have the opportunity to ask any individual student why they were so reluctant to work in groups. Professor Luz Baião and I were very insistent that students must know how to work together, as they learn from one another when they do so and can leverage each other's strengths. I did, however, include a question in the survey I sent at the end of the term that provided some insights.

Writing In groups, whether at home or in class, is...

28 responses

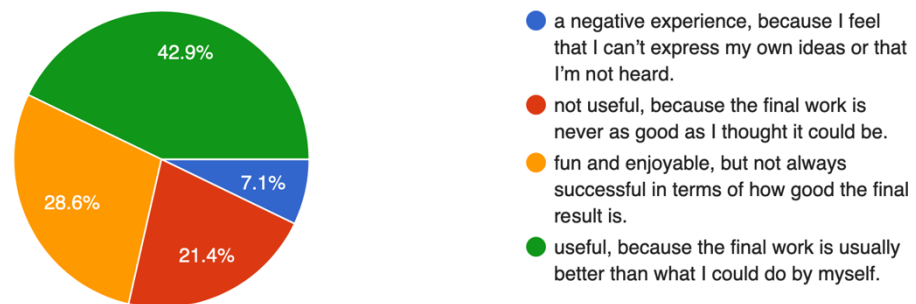


Fig. 9. Survey question to 10th B1 on group writing tasks

Surprisingly, the majority of students understood that they did better in terms of grades because of this group work. The survey was sent out after the first group work was finished and graded, and so those quantitative final results may have influenced this opinion since, at first, this did not seem to be consensual.

Regardless of results, however, some students still believed that they would – or at least might – have done better had they worked by themselves. Eight students, despite enjoying the experience, claimed that the end product and final result might not be as good as it could be had they done it alone, and six claimed that group work was not useful at all because the resulting paper never met their standards. In the third term, I asked student LR why she had chosen the former response and whether something had not gone well during the first group work in particular, together with what she thought I could do to mitigate any bad experiences. LR said that the members of her group did not work equally as hard and that one person in particular was very uncooperative when setting up meetings and when deciding on topics to address in the paper. She did not have any suggestions for me, and told me that she thought this sort of behavior would happen in any real-world setting.

More worryingly still were the two students who responded that they did not feel considered when contributing to their group work. One of those was ML, the student LR had previously pointed out as being uncooperative. Privately, I asked her why she had replied that way and ML said that this had been a recurring problem for her. We talked about how she might practice and improve expressing herself more assertively, and I said I would try and help. Later, when students were working on their paper in the third term, I assigned a

lesson specifically to allow them to form groups and begin working together while the three teachers provided help. I paid close attention to ML's group. While their interaction seemed to go well and ML participated actively in giving and accepting ideas, two weeks later, she would end up coming to Professor Luz Baião and I and request to do the paper by herself, as things were not going well with the group. Despite our attempts to mediate, we ended up allowing it.

Managing personalities different from our own and being able to negotiate and compromise on our ideas is not easy, but it is a crucial part of most professional realities. ML did not reach the phase in which she began the actual writing process because she was blocked in the phase of organizing the work and it should be every teacher's goal to help students overcome these difficulties and develop skills that go beyond the classroom.

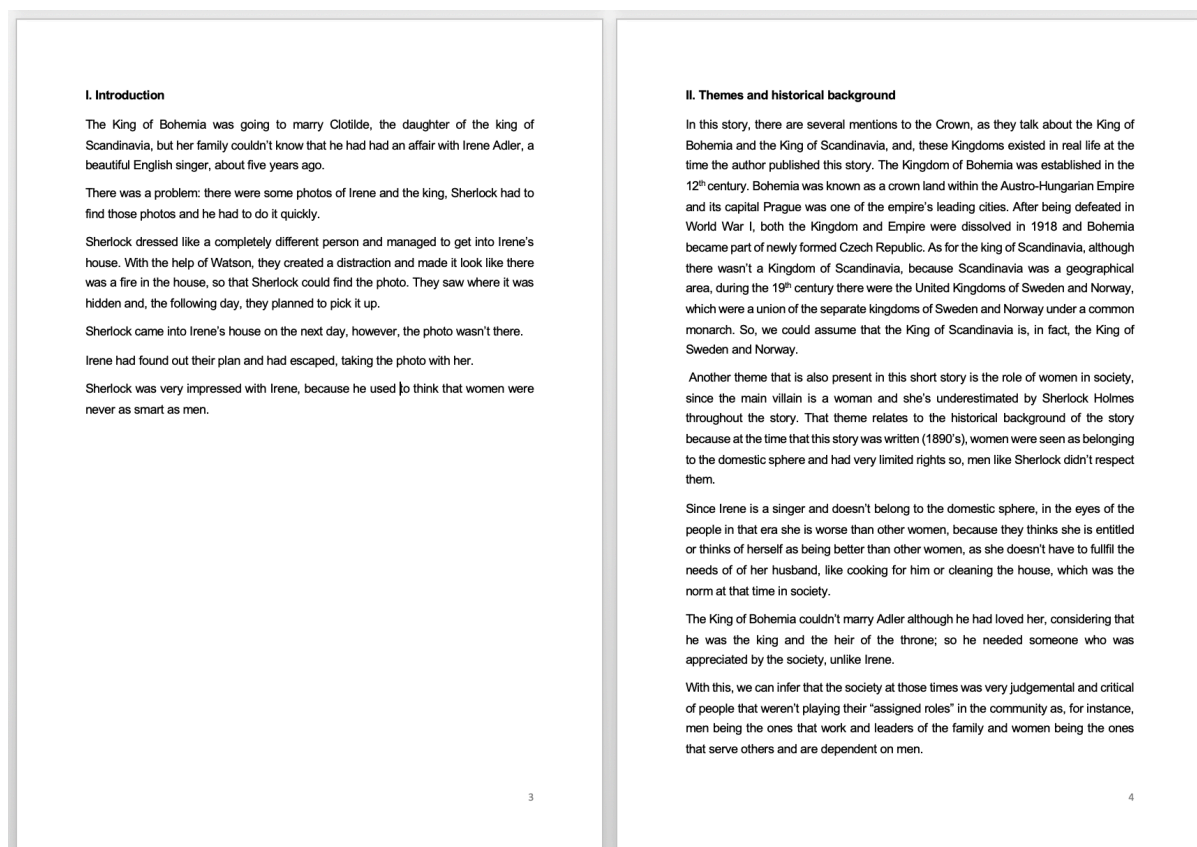


Fig. 10. Two pages from a paper by students LP, BA, RI, MC and CM on a short story

As for the writing aspect of these group papers, the initial phase of the process, as said previously, involved group discussion and agreement on what topics to address and on

how to organize and divide the work. In the third term, this was done during a lesson and I could see how students interacted and how they negotiated what each member of the group would do. After that, students worked independently and wrote their portions.

One issue when professor Luz Baião and I were reading the papers was precisely this. There did not seem to be any continuity in the style and form of writing. Instead, there were chapters with repeated information, different variants of English, and even conflicting information. We explained to students that, while it is natural that they worked on their parts by themselves, the work should be revised by all members together in order to guarantee cohesion and coherence in its entirety. Students seemed to understand and accept the suggestion and act accordingly as, for the most part, this problem was resolved.

Assessment was done following the descriptors for written production ([appendix 2](#)) and improvement in these papers was particularly effective. With feedback adapted to the groups as well as the individual students in it, together with the fact that these students had all different strengths and weaknesses, resulted in work that was significantly enhanced in its second or third versions.

3.4. Personal reflection

This internship gave me the opportunity to apply the theory I learned during the first year of this Master's as well as to further research on the topic for this report. It also allowed me to reflect on my past practice, to challenge my teaching skills and competence, and to push my limitations. Having finished this phase, I got the opportunity to reflect on how it has impacted me.

As I observed Professor Luz Baião and compared her habits with those I acquired by myself when teaching in private schools and language centers, what I could improve on in my own practicum became clearer. Professor Luz Baião led her lessons in a calm and assertive manner. Every lesson began with students going to the board and writing the lesson number, date and summary, and then taking attendance. This took care of the logistic part of beginning a lesson and it set a calm and organized atmosphere, making clear to students that it was time to begin working.

Whenever students were being noisy, professor Luz raised her hand and waited until they did; only then would she speak. She showcased to students the behavior she would like to see, and was never unpleasant by raising her voice or trying to speak over them. Similarly, when students participated in her lessons, Professor Luz never interrupted and allowed students to speak slowly and even pause to gather their thoughts. At times, if they were struggling too much, she would tell them that she was going to give them some time to think about what they wanted to say, and then she would keep her word and ask the student to continue their thoughts when they seemed more collected. She refrained from correcting students when they were speaking, and would instead address the most recurring mistakes later, asking for input from the whole class to find a way to correct them. When looking at students' writing, Professor Luz was very thorough and would focus on everything she felt could be improved, language and content-wise. Her notes and color-coding might feel intimidating to students, as some had expressed, but they were always meant, and usually taken, to be the opportunity to improve as much as possible.

I was inspired and tried to adopt Professor Luz Baião's posture. Students who feel comfortable and safe in the classroom may be more inclined to participate more often and to work harder on their assignments. Students learn consistently as well, and not just what the teacher instructs explicitly in the classroom. They need to be able to process ideas, apply concepts, solve problems, and work together with their peers and, when they feel that it is safe to try, more opportunities for developing these skills may take place.

As for her lessons, observing how Professor Luz Baião followed the curriculum made me realize how much flexibility is available for teachers who are willing to commit and work on creating dynamic and engaging lessons. In the past, I looked at coursebooks as guides for what to teach and how to teach it. Even if I included activities that I thought were more appealing than those presented to me, I saw the coursebook as the guarantee that all the content from the national curriculum would be covered; a safeguard that prevented me, as an inexperienced teacher, from not addressing every topic and every activity that students should be able to accomplish.

Through Professor Luz's hard work and creativity and with lessons less restricted by standard exercises from coursebooks, I saw that students are more enthusiastic about learning when lessons are engaging and relevant to their own lives. The mandatory content

was still approached and developed; Professor Luz had examined and studied the official documents carefully, and had taught me and my colleague how to do it. However, the materials she used and the tasks she requested of her students were pertinent and catered for the lives and interests of those young people. Be that as it may, many of the procedures Professor Luz implemented in her lessons worried me as I did not think I could apply them and keep lessons going as efficiently as she did.

Professor Luz allowed students to use their mobile phones, for instance, for dictionary use and to research any term they were unsure of and did not want to ask about aloud. I wondered how I would focus on my lessons and on getting students engaged and feeling safe enough to participate while preventing them from becoming distracted with their devices, but I was pleasantly surprised. Because students were asked and trusted to use their mobile phones responsibly, they did. Through the assertive communication of expectations and rules, and with dynamic and interesting lessons, the cases in which students became distracted by the occasional notification on their mobile phones were rare. For my own topic on this report, having students use their devices when writing was very useful and effective. A paper dictionary takes longer to research and is not always brought to class by students. Having a bilingual dictionary, an English dictionary and a thesaurus so conveniently accessible made students much more willing to write both in class and at home.

Another habit of Professor Luz Baião's was having students get together in groups, sometimes multiple times in the same lesson after having them go back to working individually again. Once more, I worried that having students move around in the classroom so much and so often would generate confusion and noise. This could change the calm learning atmosphere that had been initially established, and waste valuable time that could otherwise be spent on the actual activity itself. Yet, whenever there was too much noise or students became distracted from the task they were given, Professor Luz raised her hand and waited for everyone to be quiet, and then would gently but firmly remind them of her expectations. Professor Luz did these sorts of activities so often that students knew exactly how to act. Observing her method and imitating her posture, I was able to do it as well with my classes. I realize now that it is not worth advocating for soft skills but then complaining about students who do not know how to work together and stay focused on tasks when we

do not give them a chance to do so and improve when they make mistakes. Where else will they do it if not during our lessons?

With everything considered, the power of reflection is obvious to me now. There were lessons and activities which were more effective than others, and there were times when students corresponded to my intentions and objectives, and others in which they did not. The constant variable is the teacher. Regardless of the circumstance, it is up to the teacher to analyze the problems that arise in the classroom and create a plan to counter them. This internship allowed me not to do this alone; my reflection was greatly aided from weekly discussions about each of our lessons – mine and my colleague's – with Professor Luz. A teacher must ponder his/her own work and results, and this is often a lonely contemplative process. Without the internship, and without someone to help me look at my practice from the outside, I think this process would be much more challenging and never wield the same results.

4. Conclusion

Writing is a crucial competence that students of English as a foreign language must develop as they learn and become more proficient in the language, and that which can bring various benefits for those who master it. Writing well in English in particular has become fundamental because of how widespread the language is throughout the world.

For students, however, writing is often seen as one of the most difficult skills to learn and develop. Through questioning this problematic of why students consider this competence so challenging and testing solutions, some conclusions can be drawn. Writing is an intensive skill to practice because it involves several processes at once. Students may feel like they do not have sufficient linguistic knowledge to express their ideas, and it may be difficult for them to even find interesting and authentic points to make in a way that is creative and engaging. Moreover, when having to address a topic they do not feel knowledgeable and invested in, students may feel intimidated and frustrated at the task.

As such, it is the teacher's responsibility to request written production tasks only when students have developed and progressed in their understanding of a certain topic. Not only that, the topics selected must be engaging and relevant to students' lives. Diverse tasks applied in differing approaches may motivate and interest students more and allow them to practice different strategies towards writing and different discourses. Another solution that proved effective, concerning in particular students who felt insecure in their linguistic ability, was to allow the use of ICT resources, such as online dictionaries and thesauruses, because students seemed to write more and more confidently when they did not need to interrupt their thought processes and ask the teacher for help on linguistic issues as regularly.

The way teachers instruct students on how to write well and how they choose to have students proceed through the writing process can change how effectively this skill is acquired. Equally as important is how teachers should react to students' work when it is handed in. It was observed that the aspects which teachers choose to focus on and the tone they elect to use when addressing students' shortcomings on their writing can influence how effective their feedback will be and how much of it students will be open to accepting. Not only that, feedback has the potential of affecting even external factors to writing such as students' self-esteem and how much they believe in their own ability to improve.

The feedback provided on written production tasks during this practicum followed certain principles. In order to help students understand and value the communicative intent of writing rather than just seeing it as a linguistic exercise, a response considering the opinions and thoughts expressed on their texts was always provided as feedback. Students seemed to take notice of these comments and would often act on the texts or reply back justifying their ideas, either through email or during lessons.

Because some students expressed difficulty in understanding certain corrections, I was as thorough as possible in my feedback concerning linguistic, organizational, and technical issues concerning ICT. While overcorrection may be an issue and overwhelm students as they look over their work filled with notes, most valued when the teacher was specific about what they wanted to improve, whether it was changing a verb tense, reorganizing a paragraph, or fixing the text spacing on the digital document. ICT, played a fundamental role in providing comprehensive feedback that was accessible and relatively easy to address and use in corrections, specifically when students used Word and provided comments through highlights and the review feature.

Additionally, even if they were numerous, corrections were provided in a sensible manner, with suggestions and hedges, and this allowed for feedback to be perceived as more positive and as a means of the teacher cooperating with students in their improvement. Students' work must be treated as a whole, with consideration to both its linguistic and communicative facets, but truly effective feedback must take into consideration the students themselves as people with different personalities, backgrounds, and needs.

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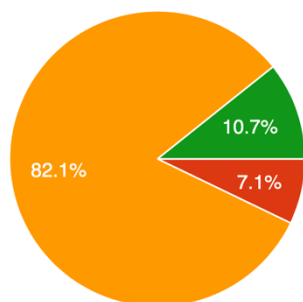
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6. Appendices

6.1. Full survey on feelings towards writing on 10th B1

In my opinion, having good writing skills is...

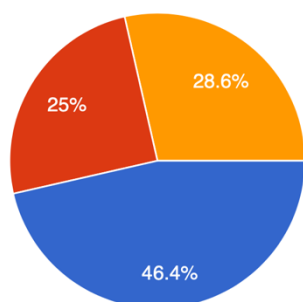
28 responses



- not important.
- not as important as having other language skills (speaking, listening, or reading.)
- as important as having other language skills (speaking, listening, or reading.)
- very important.

Before I start writing, ...

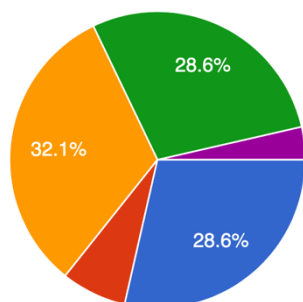
28 responses



- I don't think much about what I want to write about, because the text usually takes form as I write.
- I think about what I want to write about for a few minutes.
- I plan my text by writing short notes or topics that I want to approach.
- I write a detailed plan.

The most difficult thing about writing any text is...

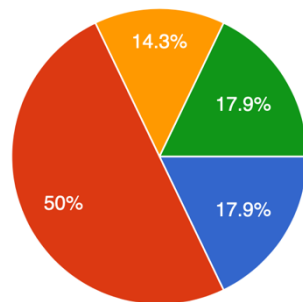
28 responses



- remembering the vocabulary I want to use.
- remembering the grammar rules I have to follow.
- finding ideas of what to write about.
- organizing my ideas so that my text is well structured.
- Options a b and d

Writing seems to be easier when...

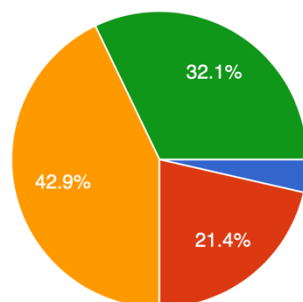
28 responses



- the teacher provides more direction and guidelines for me to follow.
- topics are interesting and provide different aspects for me to approach.
- I have more time to think and prepare, such as when I do it at home.
- we discuss topics and ideas during class before we begin writing.

I consider individual written tasks, whether at home or in class, ...

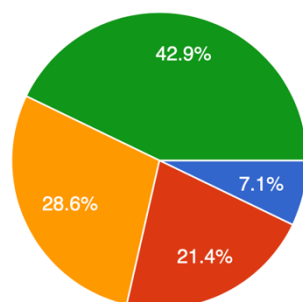
28 responses



- a waste of time, as there are other tasks I would prefer to do.
- too difficult or boring for me.
- something I must do as part of my assessment for English.
- a good way of practicing English.

Writing In groups, whether at home or in class, is...

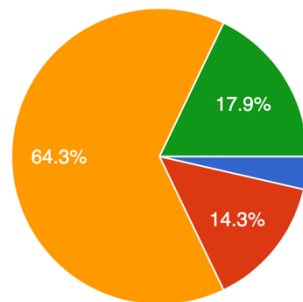
28 responses



- a negative experience, because I feel that I can't express my own ideas or that I'm not heard.
- not useful, because the final work is never as good as I thought it could be.
- fun and enjoyable, but not always successful in terms of how good the final result is.
- useful, because the final work is usually better than what I could do by myself.

Sometimes, I am allowed to improve my written tasks. I think this improvement work is...

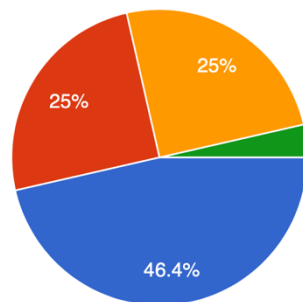
28 responses



- not useful, because I already did my best in the first version.
- not useful, because I often don't understand my mistakes or how to correct them.
- useful, because I can try and get a better grade.
- useful, because it helps me improve my English.

When correcting my written work, I think my teacher should...

28 responses



- point out all mistakes I made concerning vocabulary, grammar, spelling, punctuation, organisation, content, log...
- only point out language mistakes and leave the content exactly the way I expressed it.
- focus on the ideas I wanted to express and point out only the "bigger" language mistakes.
- rewrite my sentences and my ideas to make what I was trying to say clearer.

6.2. Descriptors for the assessment of written production



**AGRUPAMENTO DE ESCOLAS ROMEU
CORREIA**



ES C/ 3º CICLO DE ROMEU CORREIA
Ano Letivo: 2018-2019

A Professora de Inglês
Luz Baião

CRITÉRIOS E DESCRITORES PARA CLASSIFICAÇÃO DA PRODUÇÃO ESCRITA	
CLASSIFICAÇÃO	DESCRITORES
200 Pontos 50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fundamentação coerente e relevante, espírito crítico (exemplificação se exigida) Muito boa organização e sequência das ideias, e absoluta clareza de expressão Considerável desenvolvimento do tema (domínio sociocultural/análise literária) Criatividade/Iniciativa na apresentação/no conteúdo/no desenvolvimento dos temas Leque amplo e exato de vocabulário Estruturas gramaticais corretas e frases complexas (conjunções, relativos) Sem falhas de ortografia/pontuação Adequado <i>layout</i>/aspeto gráfico das páginas/uso e legendagem de fotos Conhecimento da elaboração de um índice Conhecimento e criatividade em informática, e respeito pelas configurações exigidas Respeito pelo limite de palavras (se exigido)
180 Pontos 45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fundamentação coerente e relevante (exemplificação se exigida) Boa organização e sequência das ideias, e clareza de expressão Muito bom desenvolvimento do tema (domínio sociocultural/análise literária) Leque amplo de vocabulário Estruturas gramaticais corretas e frases complexas (conjunções, relativos) Sem/Poucas falhas de ortografia/pontuação Adequado <i>layout</i>/aspeto gráfico das páginas/uso e legendagem de fotos Conhecimento da elaboração de um índice Conhecimento e criatividade em informática, e respeito pelas configurações exigidas Respeito pelo limite de palavras (se exigido)
160 Pontos 40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boa fundamentação (exemplificação se exigida) Adequada organização e sequência das ideias, e clareza de expressão Bom desenvolvimento do tema (domínio sociocultural/análise literária) Bom e variado leque de vocabulário Estruturas gramaticais com poucos erros não impeditivos da compreensão e frases complexas (conjunções, relativos) Poucas falhas de ortografia/pontuação Adequado <i>layout</i>/aspeto gráfico das páginas/uso e legendagem de fotos Conhecimento da elaboração de um índice Conhecimento em informática, e respeito pelas configurações exigidas Respeito pelo limite de palavras (se exigido)
140 Pontos 35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boa fundamentação, mas com falhas (falhas na exemplificação se exigida) Adequada organização e sequência das ideias, e clareza de expressão Razoável desenvolvimento do tema (domínio sociocultural/análise literária) Adequado leque de vocabulário Estruturas gramaticais com bastantes erros não impeditivos da compreensão/Frases com conjunções básicas: <i>and, but, because</i>; e relativos <i>who, which</i>) Algumas falhas de ortografia/pontuação Adequado <i>layout</i>/aspeto gráfico das páginas/uso e legendagem de fotos Conhecimento da elaboração de um índice Conhecimento em informática, e respeito pelas configurações exigidas Respeito pelo limite de palavras (se exigido)

120 Pontos 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Razoável fundamentação (pouca exemplificação se exigida) ◆ Razoável organização e sequência das ideias, e razoável clareza de expressão ◆ Razoável desenvolvimento do tema (domínio sociocultural/análise literária) ◆ Nem sempre adequado/Repetitivo leque de vocabulário ◆ Estruturas gramaticais com erros impeditivos da compreensão/Frases simples/com conjunções básicas: <i>and, but, because</i>; e relativos <i>who, which</i>) ◆ Sistemáticas falhas de ortografia/pontuação ◆ Adequado <i>layout</i>/aspeto gráfico das páginas/uso e legendagem de fotos ◆ Conhecimento da elaboração de um índice ◆ Algum conhecimento em informática e respeito pelas configurações exigidas ◆ Ligeiro desrespeito pelo limite de palavras (se exigido)
100 Pontos 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Pouco consistente/Fraca fundamentação (sem exemplificação se exigida) ◆ Deficiente organização e sequência das ideias, e falta de clareza de expressão ◆ Fraco desenvolvimento do tema (domínio sociocultural/análise literária) ◆ Restrito/Pouco adequado leque de vocabulário ◆ Estruturas gramaticais com muitos erros impeditivos da compreensão/Frases simples/com conjunções básicas: <i>and, but, because</i>; e relativos <i>who, which</i>) ◆ Muitas falhas de ortografia/pontuação ◆ Pouco adequado <i>layout</i>/aspeto gráfico das páginas/uso e legendagem de fotos ◆ Fraco conhecimento da elaboração de um índice ◆ Pouco conhecimento em informática/Falhas nas configurações exigidas ◆ Ligeiro desrespeito pelo limite de palavras (se exigido)
80 Pontos 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Muito fraca fundamentação (sem exemplificação se exigida) ◆ Deficiente organização e sequência das ideias, e falta de clareza de expressão ◆ Abordagem sem desenvolvimento do tema (domínio sociocultural/análise literária) ◆ Muito restrito leque de vocabulário ◆ Fraco conhecimento das estruturas gramaticais/Deficiente sintaxe/Frases simples/incompletas ◆ Muitas falhas de ortografia/pontuação ◆ Desadequado <i>layout</i>/aspeto gráfico das páginas/uso e legendagem de fotos ◆ Desconhecimento da elaboração de um índice ◆ Pouco conhecimento em informática/Falhas nas configurações exigidas ◆ Ligeiro desrespeito pelo limite de palavras (se exigido)
60 Pontos 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Ausência de fundamentação (sem exemplificação se exigida) ◆ Ausência de organização e sequência das ideias, e de clareza de expressão ◆ Ligeira abordagem do tema (domínio sociocultural/análise literária) ◆ Desconhecimento de vocabulário/Grupos de palavras ou expressões feitas ◆ Desconhecimento das estruturas gramaticais/Deficiente sintaxe/Frases incompletas ◆ Demasiadas falhas de ortografia/pontuação ◆ Desadequado <i>layout</i>/aspeto gráfico das páginas/uso e legendagem de fotos ◆ Desconhecimento da elaboração de um índice ◆ Ausência de conhecimento em informática/Muitas falhas nas configurações exigidas ◆ Considerável desrespeito pelo limite de palavras (se exigido)
40 Pontos 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Ausência de fundamentação (sem exemplificação se exigida) ◆ Ausência de organização e sequência das ideias, e de clareza de expressão ◆ Muito ligeira abordagem do tema (domínio sociocultural/análise literária) ◆ Desconhecimento total de vocabulário/Texto plagiado ◆ Desconhecimento total da gramática ◆ Demasiadas falhas de ortografia/pontuação ◆ Desadequado <i>layout</i>/aspeto gráfico das páginas/uso e legendagem de fotos ◆ Desconhecimento da elaboração de um índice ◆ Ausência de conhecimento em informática/desrespeito pelas configurações exigidas ◆ Considerável desrespeito pelo limite de palavras (se exigido)
0 Pontos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Desvio do tema proposto, independentemente da qualidade/extensão do texto ◆ Não identificação do tema quando o texto não permita identificá-lo inequivocamente ◆ Envio tardio do trabalho
Um degrau abaixo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Textos enviados fora do prazo, quando aceites

6.3. Lesson plan number four and material used

Lesson Plan 4

41st and 42nd Lessons

Class 10th B1

90 minutes

17th of January, 2019

Plan

Polysemic words.

Introduction to issues concerning modern technology.

Main objective

To appraise the impact of technology on society.

Anticipated problems

Students may be reluctant to read the poem expressively and may need to be coaxed into doing so.

Students may view and discuss the images at a superficial level. Before they start discussing the images in pairs, they should be told to look deep into them and consider both a positive and negative side. Regardless, the teacher should be prepared to lead the discussion into deeper meaning.

Subsidiary aims	Procedures	Interaction pattern	Aids and materials	Time
To write the plan of the lesson	The teacher and students follow established classroom procedure, opening the lesson and taking attendance.		whiteboard	5m
To read for detail To identify polysemic words connected with technology	Continuing on the idea of the previous lesson that people tend to resist new technology, students are told they will read a humorous nostalgic poem about the time before technology. Students read the poem silently and underline any word that may have a double meaning related to technology.	Individual work	manual page 65	4m
To read a poem fluently and expressively	Each stanza is read aloud and analysed, with the words with double meaning being written and explained on the board with diagrams.	Teacher ↔ whole class	whiteboard	40m
To deduce meaning behind a picture	The teacher explains that the class has been learning about "the good old days" as the title of the poem suggests, about the origins and impact technology has had. Now, students will move more specifically into modern digital technology. The teacher tells students they are going to see a series of images related to modern technology and the impact it has had on us, positive and negative. Each image should have a general idea, but more than one can be identified in some cases. Students sit in pairs and take notes as they discuss. Images are displayed for 2 minutes each.	Pair work	projector slides 1 to 8 timer	16m
To express own opinion	Each image is shown and different interpretations are taken. The teacher leads discussion into deepening students' ideas.	Teacher ↔ whole class	projector slides 1 to 8	15m

	Possible topics to discuss: 1) Communication easier than ever / potential of having strangers "in your house" 2) Addiction / loss of human connection / using technology as a clutch 3) Ease of access to information / excessive or incorrect information / fake news 4) Having platforms to express your ideas / everyone's ideas can be shared, even those of problematic nature 5) Cybercrime / fighting crime through technology 6) High productivity / unrealistic expectations 7) Learning new things or developing new skills 8) Entertainment / piracy			
To relate previously learned information with own experience	Having looked at how technology comes with both positive and negative aspects, students are asked to write one or two paragraphs explaining how they personally use modern technology, and reflecting on its influence on their lives. These paragraphs are to be read the following lesson.	Individual work	notebooks	10m

65

Read

1. Read the following poem.

The Good Old Days

A computer was something on TV
 From a science fiction show of note
 A window was something you hated to clean
 And ram was the cousin of a goat.

An application was for employment
 A program was a TV show
 A curser used profanity
 A keyboard was a piano.

Compress was something you did to the trash
 Not something you did to a file
 And if you unzipped anything in public
 You'd be in jail for a while.

Log on was adding wood to the fire
 Hard drive was a long trip on the road
 A mouse pad was where a mouse lived
 And a backup happened to your commode.

Cut you did with a pocket knife
 And paste you did with glue
 A web was simply a spider's home
 And a virus was just the flu.

I guess I'll stick to my pad and paper
 And the memory that's in my head
 I hear nobody's been killed in a computer crash
 But when it happens they'll wish they were dead.

Author Unknown (abridged)

6.4. Lesson plan number eight and material used

Lesson Plan 8

49th and 50th Lessons

Class 10th B1

90 minutes

4th of February, 2019

Plan

Correction of the test.
Teenglish.

Main objective

To appraise the impact of technology on society and language.
To recognise and critique social changes in modern times.

Anticipated problems

Depending on questions students may have concerning the test, its correction may take more or less time than expected. If there's no time to finish the last activity, part of it should be moved to the following lesson.

Subsidiary aims	Procedures	Interaction pattern	Aids and materials	Time
To write the plan of the lesson	The teacher and students follow established classroom procedure, opening the lesson and taking attendance.		whiteboard	5m
To examine and clarify own mistakes	The teacher hands out tests and leads correction, clarifying any doubts that arise.	Teacher ↔ whole class	test correction audio	45m
To recognise different abbreviations and acronyms related to technology	The teacher tells students that technology has led to changes in the English language and that they will look at abbreviations and acronyms* that are relatively new. Students are shown a list of these words and given 2 minutes to search the ones they don't know. As students have finished researching, the teacher asks for meanings and examples in sentences. *	Individual work Teacher ↔ whole class	Projector slide 1 mobile phones	15m
To use an online collaborative database	Students are told that some slang may not be so obvious since it's used mostly regionally in English speaking countries. Students are introduced to Urban Dictionary, a collaborative dictionary for slang. Students receive the worksheet and are given 10 minutes to match the expressions with their meanings. Then, the exercise is corrected.	Individual work	slide 2 mobile phones worksheet	23m
	For homework, students are asked to send in a short email (a few sentences or a paragraph is enough) using slang. Students can tell me about their day, give me their opinion on today's lesson, or anything else they feel is appropriate. The emails will be read next lesson.	Teacher ↔ whole class		2m

SMH YOLO IDK



IMO IKR AFK SMS


HTTP IRL FTW LOL

BRB JK BTW

www.urbandictionary.com

Dude, this class was sick!

TOP DEFINITION




sick 

used by 'chavs' to state that some things is good

Chav: Oooooo- dat new tune from Timbaland is sick man innit- brrrap!
Law-abiding citizen: Errr, yes.

#brap #sick head #brrrap #cool #big up

by Alex_UK December 21, 2007

 2223  525 

6.5. Descriptors for the assessment of oral production

Observação Direta da Oralidade	
Muito Bom (18 a 20 valores)	Participa em toda a apresentação (há distribuição uniforme de tarefas); está concentrado; domina todo o trabalho. Revela compreender tudo o que diz com muita facilidade. Apresenta uma parte muito clara e desenvolvida do trabalho (com vantagens e desvantagens, diferentes pontos de vista); justifica todas as opiniões/posições; é criativo e original. Tem as ideias muito bem organizadas (não apresenta contradições nem repetições); tem um discurso muito linear. Fala sem hesitar, com muito boa pronúncia, entoação e pontuação; tem vocabulário muito bom e gramática sem erros nenhuns. Tem ideias muito interessantes; cativa a atenção de todos e consegue que os outros colegas participem.
Bom (14 a 17 valores)	Participa em quase toda a apresentação; está concentrado; domina todo o trabalho. Revela compreender bem o que diz. Apresenta uma parte muito clara do trabalho, embora pouco desenvolvida; justifica quase todas as opiniões/posições; revela alguma criatividade/originalidade. Tem as ideias organizadas (não apresenta contradições nem repetições). Fala quase sem hesitações, com boa pronúncia, entoação e pontuação; tem bastante vocabulário e gramática quase sem erros. Tem ideias interessantes; cativa a atenção de quase todos; consegue que alguns colegas participem.
Suficiente (10 a 13 valores)	Participa medianamente na apresentação; está concentrado; deixa perceber que não conhece todo o trabalho. Revela alguma dificuldade na compreensão do que diz/lê. Apresenta uma parte clara do trabalho mas curta/mais curta do que os restantes elementos; nem sempre justifica as opiniões/posições; não se nota criatividade/originalidade. Falta-lhe organização; por vezes repete-se; contradiz-se. Hesita ao falar/ler; a pronúncia nem sempre é correta; não faz entoação; tem pouco vocabulário; faz erros sistemáticos/repetitivos de gramática. Tem algumas ideias interessantes; nem sempre cativa a atenção dos colegas; não consegue que outros colegas participem.
Insuficiente (7 a 9 valores)	Participa pouco na apresentação (não está à vontade no trabalho); nem sempre está concentrado (perturba o trabalho dos outros); nota-se que não conhece todo o trabalho (que não participou na sua realização escrita). Revela muita dificuldade em compreender o que diz/lê. Não é claro na parte que apresenta; tem uma apresentação muito curta; não justifica as opiniões/posições. Percebe-se que não preparou o trabalho; repete-se; esquece-se; não responde às questões que lhe colocam. Hesita muito ao falar/ler; a pronúncia não é correta; não faz entoação; tem muito pouco vocabulário; usa a língua materna; faz muitos/diversos erros de gramática. Não revela interesse; não cativa a atenção dos outros.
Muito Insuficiente (0 a 6 valores)	Mal participa na apresentação (engana-se); não está concentrado (perturba a participação dos outros); nota-se que não conhece o trabalho (que não participou na sua realização escrita). Não compreende o que lê. É muito confuso na sua apresentação; tem uma parte muito curta; não sabe o que dizer; não responde às questões que lhe colocam. Tem demasiada dificuldade em ler; não tem vocabulário; usa a língua materna; desconhece as regras da gramática. Não prende a atenção de ninguém.



World Poetry Day

a cross-curricular celebration of poetry

Background and Objectives

An initiative by UNESCO, World Poetry Day has been celebrated globally on March 21st since 1999. One of the main objectives of World Poetry Day is to support linguistic diversity through poetic expression and to offer different people the opportunity to be heard within their communities.

The celebration of World Poetry Day is also meant to encourage a return to the oral tradition of poetry recitals, to promote the teaching of poetry, and to restore a dialogue between poetry and the other arts, so that the art of poetry will no longer be considered an outdated form of art, but one which enables society as a whole to regain and assert its identity.

Suggested Activities

- Reading and analyzing poems in class.
- Writing a poem on a specific topic being approached in class.
- Writing a poem using specific words provided by the teacher.
- Writing a poem from an image or similar prompt.
- Reciting poems expressively for several audiences (different classes, different grades, for teachers in the teacher's lounge).
- Illustrating a poem.
- Bringing poems by known poets to exhibit throughout the school.

As March 21st is also Arbor Day in Portugal, activities combining both themes can be developed. For instance, younger students may illustrate tree leaves with poems about the environment.

6.6. World Poetry Day activity plan

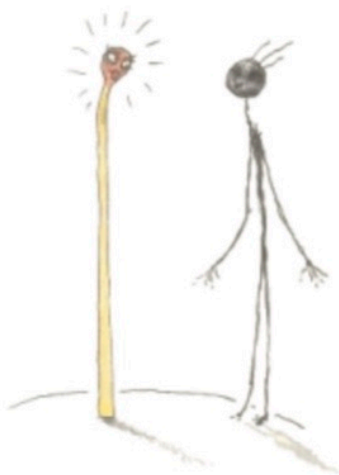
Monitoring and Evaluation

Assessment should be carried out by each class' teacher. Production of texts, presentations, and readings can be used as formal assessment moments.

Whenever possible, photos should be taken during these

Examples of poems to be read and analysed in class

- *Toxic Boy* by Tim Burton. (3rd cycle and up)
- *After love* by Sara Teasdale. (3rd cycle and up)
- *Friendly Advice to A Lot of Young Men* by Chuck Bukowski. (secondary)
- *A Martian Sends a Postcard Home* by Craig Raine (secondary)



Stick Boy liked Match Girl,
He liked her a lot.
He liked her cute figure,
he thought she was hot.



But could a flame ever burn
for a match and a stick?
It did quite literally;
he burned up quick.

Image: *Stick Boy and Match Girl in Love*, by Tim Burton.

6.7. Lesson plan in preparation for World Poetry Day and material used

Lesson Plan 17

73rd and 74th Lessons

Class 10th B1

90 minutes

18th of March, 2019

Plan

Interpreting a poem: *People need people* by Benjamin Zephaniah.

Writing a poem.

Main objective

To think critically about issues concerning teens in modern times.

To develop an appreciation for poetry.

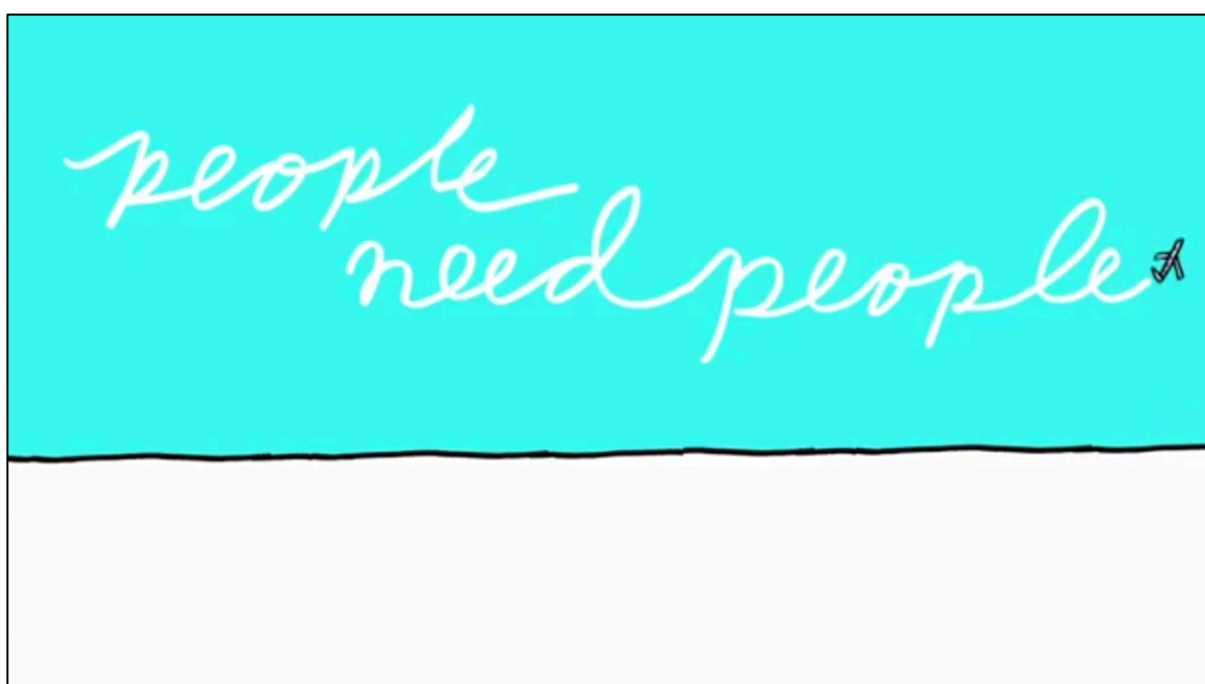
Anticipated problems

Writing a poem in a second language may prove difficult. As students are given time to write their poem and as the teacher goes around the room helping each group, if it is clear that most groups are finding it difficult to begin, the teacher may show her example, prohibiting everyone from using the value *gratitude*.

Subsidiary aims	Procedures	Interaction pattern	Aids and materials	Time
To write the plan of the lesson	The teacher and students follow established classroom procedure, opening the lesson and taking attendance.		whiteboard	5m
To reflect on and express own opinion on personal values	<p>The teacher tells students they will watch a video with no sound and that they must look at the images and think about what it may be about. The video is stopped at 1:12.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you describe what happens in the video? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What did you see in the first scene? At the beginning, a man is walking alone in the rain. He passes by another man. There are eyes above him, then, a smiling face. ○ There's a part with an island, what did you see then? The same man is on an island, he throws a bottle into the sea but a fish eats it. A ship passes. A ladder drops from a hot air balloon. There's a woman there and the man goes away with her. ○ When the man and the woman disappear, we move to a classroom. What then? A teacher explains that person plus person equals happy face. We see children playing outside school, a couple kissing, two people fighting. ○ And at the end, when we see the city? We see a community filled with people. The couple walk along together. • The man at the beginning of the video and the one at the end are the same. What's the difference between them? At the beginning, he's alone and it's raining so maybe he's sad. When the story ends, he has a woman with him and the scenario is lighter and happier. 	Teacher ↔ Students	projector video without sound	30m

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you interpret what happens in the middle part of the video? Maybe it represents his life. Sometimes he feels lost (alone on an island), he learns new things, he has fun, he fights... • From these images, what do you think this video is about? What could the message behind this video be? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Things change in our life. o Everything in life is connected. o Everything happens for a reason, even if it's bad. o [...] • Can you connect this visual story with any values that we've been talking about? Friendship, love, community, courage, perseverance... <p>The teacher plays the remainder of the video and shows students the title that appears.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking at the title of this video, can you connect it with the ideas you gave me? Does the title make sense with how you interpreted the video? [...] • Does it give you new ideas on the images? We can't go through life alone and that we need other people. [...] <p>At this point, the teacher writes the first part of the plan on the board.</p>			
<p>To listen for gist</p> <p>To express own opinion</p>	<p>The teacher tells students to form trios, and tells them the video will now play with sound. Students must pay attention to why "people need people" according to the author. After the video finishes, students are given two minutes to choose the most important reasons why people need other people.</p> <p>The teacher asks different groups for ideas, and projects the poem on the board as they share.</p>	<p>Group work</p> <p>Teacher ↔ whole class</p>	<p>video with sound</p> <p>notebooks</p> <p>slides 1 to 3</p>	<p>20m</p>
<p>To write creatively and cooperatively with specific guidelines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher asks students why they think she brought that poem to class. Because it's a fun way to think about values, because values are usually connected to how we act towards other people... • Do you know why I chose a poem specifically? <p>The teacher tells students about World Poetry Day on the following Thursday (when the class will be dedicated to Citizenship.) In order to participate, students are told they will begin writing a poem this class.</p> <p>At this point, the teacher writes the second part of the plan on the board.</p> <p>Poems will be written in trios, in a separate sheet of paper, and with inspiration from the poem read previously. Students are told to first pick a value. Then, they should create a verse which will be their poem's title and which will recur throughout the poem. Finally, they must create at least one stanza.</p>	<p>Teacher ↔ whole class</p> <p>Group work</p>	<p>slide 4</p> <p>slide 5 (see anticipated problems)</p>	<p>25m</p>

	Students are given freedom on how many stanzas they want to create or on whether they want to rhyme or not. Students must hand in what they created by the end of the class.			
	As a few students had asked to talk about the oral presentation, the teacher provides tips on what they could do, using the evaluation grid for oral presentation assessment.		group oral presentation assessment grid	10m



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EC57oeaDpfM>